THE SCRIPTURE LESSON IN THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

By HELEN WODEHOUSE, D.Phil.

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IN THE

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

BY

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PREFACE

IT will be obvious how much this book owes to the leaders of Sunday-school work in recent years, especially to Mr. G. H. Archibald and Miss Hetty Lee. For the rest, any value it may have is due chiefly to the kindness of about a hundred teachers in elementary schools, who answered a letter in which I asked for their experiences and their advice. For illustrations of the child's point of view I have also used reminiscences given me by these teachers and others during their student days. In making use of these letters and essays, I have sometimes altered the wording of a passage in order to facilitate quotation, but I hope that I have nowhere substantially altered the sense. To all who have thus helped me I desire to express my warmest thanks.

I have used "Scripture lesson" in my title because it is the most familiar term, but in the text I have often preferred "Divinity." The point is a double one—first, I urge repeatedly that the lessons in this course should not be confined to the Bible; secondly, we must count all our teaching vain except in so far as we have helped the children to know and love the nature of God.

CONTENTS

PAGES

PREFACE - - - - - v

CHAPTER I

RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION AND RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE

SECTION

1, 2. The young child's experience of God. Giving him words for it. Hindrances from "bad districts" not to be exaggerated - 1–5

3. Questions asked by young children. Implications and possible answers - - 5–9

4. Ages 8-12; energy, heroism, hero-worship; perhaps utilitarianism. Bearing on religious experience - - - - 9–11

5. Ten-year-old shyness. Use of writing - 11–13

6. Adolescence; emotional and intellectual growth - - - - - 13

7. Religious instruction has to *interpret* religious experience and to *extend* it. The main condition for success - - - 13–14

CHAPTER II

PREPARING TO TEACH

1. Need of studying our subject, both inwardly and through books - - - 15–18

2. Need of grading classes carefully - - 18–19

3. Need of syllabus. Official syllabuses, good and bad. How to take liberties with a syllabus. Keeping the work fresh - - - 19-22

SECTION PAGES

4. Need of preparing our lessons. Help through Sunday-school organizations. How to use model lessons. Must prepare not only for next day - - - - - 23–25

CHAPTER III

TELLING A STORY

1. Different stories for different ages. Treatment of parables for different ages - - 26–27
2. Need of expanding Bible stories. Our own imaginative work beforehand. Technique of story-telling. Question of verbal preparation. Improvement by practice. Reading aloud as a substitute for telling - 28–33
3. Use of Bible version. Use of pictures and models - - - - - 33–34
4. The sin of anti-climax, and of separating the moral from the story. How to end - 34–35

CHAPTER IV

THE CHILDREN'S PART

1. Infants' "expression-work." Sand-trays, models, sketches. Development with juniors. Charts, maps, collections; practical beneficence; models for use of class 36–40
2. Oral work. Narration. Dramatizing - 40–42
3. Children's use of Bibles - - - 42–44
4. Question-and-discussion lessons - - 44–48
5. Written work - - - - 48–52
6. Importance of expression-work everywhere. Its use with over-familiar subject-matter 52–55
7. Experiment first in other lessons. New teachers may have to follow old customs

SECTION PAGES

for a time. Difficulties from bad organization - - - - - - 55–56

A note on certain difficulties of Bible-reading. Standards of propriety, and problems of sex-knowledge - - - - - 56–58

CHAPTER V

TWO SIDES OF A QUESTION

A.—Memory Work

1. Reminiscences of childhood - - - - 59–60
2. Danger of abuse of memory work. External examination *versus* inspection. Alternatives to memorizing. Means of diminishing boredom and anxiety - - - - 61–64

B.—The Devotional Side

3. The divinity lesson as an association-centre, happy or unhappy. Organization to be free and harmonious. Room for ownership and for fellowship - - - - - 64–67
4. Importance of beauty in sight and sound. School prayers: their tradition and organization. Two experiments - - - 67–69
5. Hymn-singing - - - - - 69–71
6. Teaching to pray - - - - - 71–72
7. Fellowship on pilgrimage - - - - 72

CHAPTER VI

INTELLECTUAL REALITY IN RELIGIOUS TEACHING AND LEARNING

1. Realization; not only making vivid, but connecting with rest of our knowledge. Use of cross-reference and correlation with

SECTION PAGES

other subjects. Use of history, geography, newspapers - - - - 73–77

2. New Testament reading without realization 77–79

3. Realization is bound to lead to questioning. Ethical difficulties in the Bible - - 80–81

4. Historical difficulties. Imperative need of truthfulness. Practical suggestions - 82–87

5. The problem of parents' disapproval - 87–91

CHAPTER VII

A CHAPTER FOR SOME TEACHERS

1. Have tried to keep wide field of content for divinity lesson, as in old idea of "Sunday reading." Are there other difficulties than lack of preparation and lack of method? Some teachers find more - - 92–93

2. Not everyone's duty to teach divinity. Still, remove obstacles if we can - - 93–94

3. Obstacles of unreasoned dislike of this lesson; of shyness; of believing oneself irreligious 94–96

4. Obstacle of difficulties in belief - - 97–98

5. Our duty in this case must depend partly on public opinion, but not wholly - - 98–101

6. The best teaching can only be a fragment 101

APPENDIX

A.—Examinations for Teachers - - 105

B.—Courses of Study - - - - 105

C.—How to Look for Books - - - 107

D.—Some Books for Bible Study - - 109

E.—Some Non-Biblical Material - - 115

F.—The Teacher's Own Reading - - 115

THE SCRIPTURE LESSON IN THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

CHAPTER I

RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION AND RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE

1.

"One day," writes a correspondent, "I was looking after my friend's small daughter, a babe of just two. Her mother had always tried to train her to share whatever was given her, and as there were no brothers or sisters she encouraged her to share her acquisitions with the maid. I had some chocolates wrapped in silver paper, which made them, I suppose, especially attractive to the child. Giving her two, I told her to take one to Ada, the maid, and have the other herself. She hesitated a moment, and then said: 'No, no one for Ada.' Fearing that if I insisted she might begin to cry and cause a scene, I said: 'All right; give me a kiss instead.' But she replied: 'No, no kiss.' After standing still for a second, she suddenly turned and walked to the window. She stood there for

most to the child's own love for something smaller and weaker than himself—a puppy or kitten. In this connection remember that the most important thing for religion is the inside experience of loving, not that of being loved; though this must often come first to warm the other into life.

At any rate, we may find that the children from a poor home are unexpectedly ready for the things we have to bring. "I have come to the conclusion," writes one teacher, "that the poorer the class of child, the more reverent is his attitude towards all Scripture teaching." "I find," writes another, "that Scripture has a very different appeal to children living in different circumstances. For the first three years I taught in a school where the children have many advantages. . . . To these children reason seemed more necessary and helpful than feeling. . . . Although they came from refined homes and had much loving care lavished upon them, the gentleness of Jesus Christ's personality did not seem to have the same appeal as to poorer children, but rather His strength in facing danger. . . . I think Scripture, on the whole, meant History for most of them. . . . The school where I am at present is in one of the poorest parts of the town. The families are muddled up; indeed, it is sometimes very difficult to know who does really belong to the children. Their homes are needy and made so still more by lack of thrift. In my class of thirty-two I have

at least eight who have apparently never had fathers ; and yet some of these are among the most sensitive types. . . . The children in this district are more primitive—I might even say more real—than those I knew before. They understand far more about Love, Hate, Jealousy. They seem to have an awakened instinct much earlier than the children of richer homes. Scripture to them has a stronger personal appeal, the New Testament more than the Old. They show a vivid and intense interest in Jesus Christ because He was poor and interested in healing sick people. . . . The more they can hear of Jesus, the more are they anxious to hear. His suffering they compare with that of those in the war. To these children the Personality of God is the most evident factor in their everyday life ; all that is good of necessity comes from Him ; and they have an admiration for those who try to be like Christ."

3.

In bringing our interpreting conceptions to small children, some of us tend, perhaps, to trouble a little too much over the question : " Do they understand ?" Words and their meaning are learnt at that age by hearing and by use, not by definition. I remember the first time I experimented in using the word " since." It seemed to convey my meaning to the hearer, and henceforth I felt I understood it, though I could not define it even now. So we use with

our children such words as "size" and "weight" and "number," and "good" and "bad," and presently "God" and "love" and "prayer," each word linking certain experiences and fitting into a felt context, and each word holding wrapped within itself a whole philosophy which unfolds gradually and never comes to an end. "Thank God" and "God bless" may be real to us far in advance of "God" standing alone.

Children's questions, as their growing minds begin to unfold the wrapped-up philosophies, may make their development appear more erratic than it really is. The little boy who wants information about God's house and furniture, and about Mrs. God, is probably seeking less for facts than for help in the delightful new activity of imagination; just as when he questions his mother about the doings of his cousin in Australia. Under monotheism we cannot do much with Mrs. God, but we might surely encourage him to picture the houses and furniture—the blue house in the evening sky with its rosy cloud-furnishings and great hanging star; the pillared house in the wood with its bluebell carpet; and even, very delicately introduced, the house where we ask Him to live with us, where we sweep the floor and set the table and are gentle and cheerful, that divine and human may be happy together. Such play of fancy may prepare the way for childish steps which may otherwise falter, warding off the fright produced in one

class of infants by a diocesan inspector's statement that God was in the room with them.

Literal truth, on the other hand, does seem to be sought when an intelligent boy of four demands: "Are you God, daddy? Well, *who* is He, then?" We have then to face the question and do our best to answer briefly and truly according to our lights. I do not myself see how we can get far without introducing the word "spirit." "But a child cannot grasp such a conception." Neither can we, except in its folded beginnings. And we can hardly expect a child to begin to grasp it unless we will give him the *word* to help his thinking. We begin about this age to confront difficulties, for a few minutes at a time, which men have confronted at intervals for at least two thousand years without finding any short or simple answer. "I think philosophy may interest Paul later," this boy's mother remarks. "He asked his father a little time ago: 'How do we know we're here?'" Similarly a girl remembers how at six years old she sat on the bottom stair to think: "I know God made me, and He made father and mother. But who made God? I gave it up, and went on: Well, then, perhaps I'm not really here. Perhaps I'm only a dream. But whose dream? To that there was no answer, and to most of my questions there was no answer."

We have to try to answer if we are seriously asked, and inevitably we shall usually be over the questioner's head. That matters little, I

think, so long as he knows we have done our best and so long as we are brief. The mistake is to persist in talking in the hope of getting some look or response that may make us believe ourselves understood. We must do our best in a few words ; he will understand what fits him, and the rest will either be harmlessly forgotten or be laid up in his mind to unfold by-and-by.[1]

But the middle region between pure fact-seeking and pure imagination is very large, and most children understand quite early the use of analogy and comparison. I remember telling my mother that I did not wish to go to heaven because I would rather stay in places where one could read story-books and play with a hoop ; and I remember accepting with pleasure the answer she presently produced—that heaven was compared both to a city and to a garden, and that one usually found story-books in the one and could play with hoops in the other. The questioner under eight may often be seeking, not literal truth (which he does not really expect you to be able to give), but rather such suggestion as Plato offered in his "myths"—"*how one may venture to think not improperly or unworthily.*" The important matter is that our suggestion should not be improper or unworthy, that it should accord with the spirit of one's best thought. There is nothing improper in spirit,

[1] Edith Read Mumford's books (Longmans)—*e.g.*, "The Religious Difficulties of Children"—are fertile in suggesting helpful answers to difficult questions.

though vocabulary may be insufficient, when a small child announces that "God and Oswald Clarke are two of the nicest men I know." But it is otherwise, surely, with "our teacher in Standard II. who insisted that God was always looking at children to see that they did not do anything wicked, and even in the night He still looked, by means of the moon and stars; so that for many years I disliked the stars exceedingly."

4.

From about eight years old, for many children, a new colour and vigour and a new outward movement come into life, and may take even a violent form. "I must own," writes a girl who had been a timid and delicate little child, "to finding at eight and nine years old a satisfaction and savage delight in actual fighting which no other form of exercise could give. At this time the martial aspect of religion, as presented in hymns like 'Onward, Christian Soldiers' and 'Fight the Good Fight,' was the one which made the greatest appeal; and the fight seemed then an altogether attractive and straightforward one, without any of the baffling complications which presented themselves in adolescence. . . . My favourite heroes were Sir Richard Grenville as portrayed in Tennyson's 'Revenge,' the Scarlet Pimpernel, and Baden-Powell as revealed in 'Scouting for Boys'; and the touchstone for deciding whether or not a course was the right

one to pursue was not now 'Would it please mother?' but 'Would Sir Richard have done it?' or 'Would it infringe the Scout Law?' At this time I was fervently patriotic. Empire Day celebrations, with their talks on citizenship and songs of 'Hearts of Oak' and 'British Grenadiers' were a real inspiration, and the Union Jack was a real symbol of high ideals."

In such mixed and strong material we must clearly make use of the many fine elements rather than criticize the poorer. Our thought of God would be thin indeed if we could not see his gift or his presence in this welling tide of life, in the courage which pays "a cheerfully voluntary visit to the dentist in order to prove my new strange power over fear," and in the worship of courage and honour in others. This is the aspect under which, for the time, divinity must chiefly be found. And since religious instruction, like all instruction, has the function, not only of interpreting, but of extending experience, we have here a strong prompting as to the kind of extension we should give, the kind of story and history and literature through which the deepest reality may best strike home. "It is a remarkable thing," writes a teacher in an industrial school, "how our girls appreciate bravery. All the stories of brave deeds instantly appeal."

A little later there may come a minor change, especially in children with good opportunities and rather prosperous homes. Worship may seem to fade, and the place of heroic adventure

may be taken by the fascination of skill and mastery. Machinery becomes more interesting than Nature, and beauty is seen chiefly in what one makes oneself—the box and the rabbit-hutch, and the pin-cushion ruched with pink ribbon, rather than the blue hyacinth coming into bloom. Perhaps our earlier religious instruction is sometimes defective, in that we neglect to teach God as the author or the spirit of that power which is in man's hand and brain. We teach the small country child to recognize him in the hills and the flowers, and leave the city child to suppose that God has nothing to do with his own daily miracles of engines and wireless. Similarly we may be baffled now by the twelve-year-old who wears the mask of a utilitarian and cynic, appreciating nothing but efficiency and practical usefulness and hard fact. Yet "the God of Things as They Are" is not a negligible aspect of revelation, even if the mask is not merely a thin shield for tenderer intuitions growing behind. Adolescence will soon be close upon him, with a hundred new springs breaking and a hundred new colours shifting round him, and the world in ferment.

5.

This brings us to the very important matter of the pre-adolescent *shyness*. "When I was about ten years old," a boy remembers, "it used to give me an indescribable sensation of disgust and shame for my mother to suggest that she should read aloud to us from the Bible."

A girl relates of her eleven-year-old experience: "I could not bear to be asked what I really thought about anything, although I liked writing it in school compositions, for then I used to forget that anyone would see them, or at any rate there was no need to say directly to another what was in my mind. I once went to a Poetry Society recital with my mother, and afterwards I said I had liked 'Uphill' by Christina Rossetti. My mother asked me if I knew what it meant. I knew as well as I do now, but I was seized with shyness and would not say. So I merely answered, 'Oh, it means—don't worry,' knowing perfectly well that I did not think anything like that."

Evidently a good deal of clean, dry secularness will be needed in the religious instruction that we give to this age; and a certain shyness in the teacher himself will be all to the good. But a hint may be taken from the reminiscence just quoted. I shall urge repeatedly in this book that free *written* work on the most various subjects should be steadily encouraged in connection with the divinity lesson. So long as we scrupulously respect their privacy, some boys and girls will write what they would never say aloud, and we may have a chance of helping where help is needed. Or at any rate we may be saved from believing too much in that bright hard mask of apparent absorption in the visible world. Even apart from writing, a sympathetic elder may be allowed to see more. A teacher of girls records

of Standard V. : "After reading the Twenty-third Psalm to a class I asked who liked it and the part they liked. One girl said : 'I liked it because David wasn't afraid of death, and I am.' I have noticed in English lessons, when I have read a poem where death was mentioned in a consoling way, the children have been much more concerned with it than I had expected. They seem afraid and are glad to have any lines where death is described in a fearless way."

6.

Lastly, in the central school, if not within the strictly elementary, we come to the beginnings of adolescence—a time when most things come alive, and religion most of all. There is scarcely any experience now which may not serve to reveal the heart of experience. We may meet with the divine reality in human love, in worship of beauty, worship of courage, worship of truth, in chivalry and pity for the weak, in moral warfare and defeat and victory ; there is new strength and poignancy in them all. Saving the world is now more important than saving one's soul, and this pre-eminently is the time at which the central doctrine of Christianity should be shown as the doctrine of the Kingdom—the building of the City of God.

7.

I have tried in this chapter, at the risk of later repetition, to sketch "the real thing" with

which all religious instruction must have to do, and by which alone it can be finally justified. We have to interpret experience at its full width and depth, and to give material through which that experience may extend. We cannot do this through bare formulæ; truth must come to children first in concrete form and through story and picture, and we must not be too much intimidated by the critic's question: "What exact instruction in religion does this story, or this picture, give?" We must claim a reasonable latitude throughout for the content of our lessons; but the test in the end must always be: In this, above all the other lessons in school, is our teaching helping the children towards fulness of life, and helping the Kingdom to come into being?

The Kingdom must come in the business of every day for children and teacher alike. I do not propose to dwell much in this book on the plainest and most fundamental need—that the teacher himself should be wishing to walk in the Way, and seeking in all the other school hours to be just . nd kindly and to do his work well; since without this the instruction that he gives in religion will be poison rather than food to the soul. So much we may assume that we all know. In the following chapters we will deal with subordinate but more controversial matters, and discuss the method of preparing and giving this particular lesson.

CHAPTER II

PREPARING TO TEACH

I.

EVEN here we must begin with the fundamental truisms. If we are to teach anything well, whether secular or religious, we must study our subject, we must grade our classes, we must prepare or study our syllabus, and we must prepare our lessons. No gifts and no method will dispense us from the necessity of these four things.

In the first place, *we must study our subject.* If we have a number of different subjects to teach, as nearly everyone has in an elementary school, we may admit that we shall not study all of them equally or all at the same time. Each must decide for himself. But we cannot afford (I speak from experience) to leave any one subject without that renewal of life which it gains from periodical study. It may also happen that some of us, when we begin to teach, are less well prepared in "religious" subject-matter than in other parts of the school curriculum. There is one remedy only—that we should make it our business to learn more. It is necessary, moreover, here as elsewhere, that we should study in a broad and generous spirit, not limiting our-

selves to what we think can be put into our lessons. As in English history or geography or literature, so in divinity our teaching will be thin and poor unless our background is far larger than what we explicitly teach. The background is not a mere margin of safety; it tells through everything.

One part of our preparation will naturally consist in deepening our own experience. If we would teach well even the music of the bodily ear, we must spend time in listening to great music for ourselves, and in making such music as we can. There is no part of life, fortunately, that cannot help us with this; and we have good authority for holding that the hardest and narrowest conditions cannot separate us from it. I would only advise as a special point, diffidently but with conviction, that all who can possibly manage it should guard some "quiet time," daily or weekly, for the straightening of their own lives and the release of their own souls.

Further, we must study the textbooks that we are going to use. If our chief textbook is to be the Bible, then we must study the Bible with our full intelligence. We must enter into its strength and beauty as a collection of literature, and we must understand something of the lives and minds of the men who wrote it—of the scenery, physical and mental, in which they moved—of the beauties and difficulties and dangers of the days in which they lived, of the meaning which their words bore to the writers themselves, as well as the mean-

ings which other generations have since found in them. And to do this we need to use the work of scholars whose life's employment it has been to find out these things. Something, indeed, may be done without it, by our sheer concentration on the text itself. "As a beginner," writes one teacher, "I used sometimes to feel at sea from 9 to 9.30 a.m., but the difficulty was smoothed out by my reading and re-reading the Bible in the evenings, learning more and more to appreciate and love it." I imagine that this teacher's lessons could hardly fail to give some message. Nevertheless, we may sow good seed and tares together; we may be truly helping children's religion at the moment, yet fostering intellectual mistakes which may harm that religion a few years hence. In days when scholarship is at our disposal we ought not to expect to be able to dispense with it; and to understand the Bible to the level of modern standards we shall need the help of books about the Bible. Suggestions of books and the way to get them will be found in the Appendix to this volume. I hope that our study will continue at intervals throughout our teaching life, and that the portfolio of notes preserving the result of our reading and our thought will reach a goodly size by the end.

If the Church Prayer-Book is included in the school studies, what has been said will apply to this also. We are merely following the rule accepted in all other teaching—that we should

take steps to understand as well as possible the books that we are going to use. And both for Bible and Prayer-Book I believe this kind of study will go far to dissipate a hindrance spoken of by some of my correspondents—that words familiar from childhood have become stale and meaningless.

2.

Next, turning to the children of whom we have charge, we consider in what divisions we shall group them. For certain observances and ceremonies, of course, we may mass a whole department or even a whole school; but for instruction in the narrower sense, in this subject as in all others, good and close *grading* will be essential. Children under the mental age of six[1] should be taught apart from the rest, and the six-year-olds with most of the seven-year-olds will need another class of their own. Even in a small school where all these share one teacher, that teacher should try every device of sectionalizing and alternating before the principle of division is abandoned. (Where infants and seniors are all under one head, I should be strongly inclined sometimes to take a hint from the graded Sunday-schools, and make it a privilege for a person in the seventh standard to take charge of half a dozen six-year-olds in this period for twenty minutes at a time.) From eight years to ten and

[1] That is, under the level which the average child reaches at six.

from ten to twelve there is less objection in principle to combining different ages, but the combination should be allowed in divinity only if it is also used in history, geography, and literature. Nothing must suggest to the children that this subject is less important than the rest. Then at twelve or thirteen we must be on the watch again for mental changes, and be ready to meet them by special treatment and assignments, if not by change to another class.

3.

Having thus arranged our divisions, we proceed to study or to make *the syllabus from which we are to teach.*

In the first place, there must be a syllabus. Definite work must be planned out for the term and the year and the school life, exactly as in other parts of the curriculum, even though here, as everywhere else, we hold ourselves free to improve and modify as we go on. In the second place, the syllabus should be as good as possible, and English school conditions at present show an extraordinary variety in this respect. Some of the teachers who have written to me are using official syllabuses which are recently issued and excellent. Special tributes are given to those issued by the West Riding and Cambridgeshire local authorities and by the Manchester, Winchester, and Derbyshire diocesan councils. In other districts the official syllabus is avowedly

twenty years old or more, and its contents seem to go back a good deal further than this. I have been interested also in the different attitudes of the teachers, which vary from complete submission to the syllabus assigned them up to the utmost detachment and freedom. Of those who submit but are unhappy, some find the list of subjects unsuitable, while others find it much too long or much too short—about equal numbers each way. The record in misfortune seemed to belong to one young teacher, who believed herself required to spend a hundred lessons on six parables.

After studying all my correspondents' letters, my judgment is frankly as follows : A rigid head teacher may occasionally tie his assistants down to an unfitting scheme of work, and insist on their teaching the whole of this and nothing else but this ; and may thus make a situation so difficult as to be conscientiously impossible. A despotic manager of a non-provided school may occasionally do the same thing. But if neither of these creates this situation, it is not easy for anyone else to do so. An efficient teacher, able to give good reasons for the amendments he has made, is in a very strong position. The scantiness of one official syllabus is rightly treated as an invitation to expand and supplement in the way one thinks best, and the excessive length of another can be met by the magic phrase : "We have not covered the whole ground, preferring to do a part of the work more thoroughly."

Some official schemes explicitly allow of this, and I suggest it is safe to assume that very few will forbid it.

Certainly an obsolete local syllabus ought to be improved or abolished, and the first steps towards this might well be taken through the local organization of teachers. A teachers' committee, in possession of half a dozen good modern schemes such as those mentioned just now, could speak with a powerful voice and could almost certainly get something done.

In the district, if possible—in our own school, at any rate—we must aim at a working syllabus which shall be so rich, and so well co-ordinated as between class and class, that we avoid the abuses of repeating the same matter year after year. Nothing has impressed me more, in students' reminiscences of the religious teaching that they received at school, than the terrible monotony which seems to supervene just at the age which can least bear monotony. Stories enjoyed in the infants' school were finally hated by mere force of being heard again and again; and in too many schools there seems little change since present students were children. The narrow range of the Bible study has often enforced this; with one glance forward each year at Elijah and Elisha, paralysis overtook the syllabus-maker at the end of the reign of Solomon. In the newer syllabuses all this is changed, and the elder children may carry forward their Old Testament story through Exile and Return and the Macca-

bean times right down to the New Testament. Moreover, the Bible, however fully used, need not and should not be our only source. Saints and heroes have lived outside Bible lands, and they did not cease to exist when the last book in the Bible was written.

Finally, having obtained or having made a good syllabus,[1] we must not let it grow stale. Its arrangement each year, for instance, is in our own hands, and a change in arrangement requiring some recasting of the lessons may bring much refreshment. "I have found it a great help," says one teacher, "to take one book of the Bible right through, and not stories alternating from Old Testament and New Testament." Or a new book may often help. "I have read, this last year, during one lesson a week, from the life of a missionary, such as Mary Slessor or David Livingstone. The children have been eagerly interested in this, and several have asked for these books as prizes from the Sunday-school." But all variants must be introduced with the whole year's work, and if possible the whole school's work, in view. The children must not feel in our treatment of this lesson an aimlessness, or an isolation of class from class, which they would not feel elsewhere.

[1] My own way of making one would be to obtain one of those already mentioned, to experiment with it, and to modify it by degrees as the needs of my own children required.

4.

We must study our subject, and prepare our classes, and prepare our syllabus, and then *prepare our lessons.* "There is no doubt," writes one teacher frankly, "that a fair amount of worry is caused simply because there has been no preparation of the lesson." "Lessons must be prepared," says another. "It is sometimes a temptation to trust to one's previous knowledge, and personally I find this a mistake." "I am convinced," writes a third, "that it is more important and more necessary to prepare Scripture lessons than to prepare any others."

A young teacher, desiring help in preparation, does not always realize that far more detailed help is available in this than in any other subject. For only in this subject do we find special organizations, outside the day-schools, employing expert writers and teachers for the sole purpose of getting the subject well taught by a great number of untrained persons. Sunday-school teaching in the last fifteen years has made so great an advance that the best is now very good indeed; and I think that my own first act after studying my syllabus would be to write to one of the great Sunday-school societies[1] for their latest prospectus of publications, etc. If I still could not find, or were not sure of finding, the study-books, lesson-books, pictures, and apparatus that

[1] See list in Appendix.

would meet my need, then the office of that society would be at my service for advice. Of course, we cannot merely take over the lessons in any book; they would dry up as we gave them. We must do our best to make our own lesson first, and then use the book to improve it. Of course, also, no printed directions can meet every situation, and we must know our own class and trust our own common sense. But there is no reason why we should not make use of the rich assistance that is now at hand for us.

The *general* preparation for our teaching, as distinct from the preparation of the lesson for to-morrow or next week, will proceed side by side with our own study. Besides the portfolio of our own information and reflection notes, we shall have a portfolio in which we collect pictures and notes of all kinds that will be useful in a lesson some day. At least, I should use a portfolio or a drawer myself, but others may prefer to use a book and index the entries, as the preface to the West Riding syllabus recommends. A teacher in that district writes: "I have a Commonplace Book, in which I enter—

"(*a*) All Bible references to lessons—*e.g.*, the birth of Christ (St. Matthew, ch. ii.; St. Luke, ch. ii.).

"(*b*) References to be found in other books—*e.g.*, Bible stories retold in 'Child Education.'

"(*c*) Hymns which bear on any given lesson—*e.g.*, Christmas hymns.

"(*d*) Passages suitable for repetition—*e.g.*, thanksgiving for the harvest (Psalm lxv.).

"(*e*) List of available illustrations, divided into two sections:

"(i.) Pictures cut from back numbers of *Bibby's Annual, Woman's Magazine,* Sunday-school magazines.

"(ii.) Pictures to be found in books, such as 'The Gospels in Art.'

"(*f*) A list of prayers suitable for children of different ages.

To me this commonplace book is of great value. It requires a good deal of time to plan out, but, once begun, it is worth all the trouble."

By some such means we may go on growing richer every year in experience, knowledge, and skill; and the pleasure of making these collections will be so real to many of us that we shall find it natural to let the children have the same pleasure. This question, however, must be postponed for one chapter yet, while we deal with the first public business of the teacher in most classes—the telling of stories.

CHAPTER III

TELLING A STORY

I.

In the babies' class, as infants' teachers know, we have not always reached the age of listening to stories. These tiny people must have things to look at and handle, things to do, opportunities for moving about, and a teacher who, in Miss Lee's words, will utilize interruptions rather than oppose them, and whose oral teaching will be incidental and very brief. The interpretation of experience at this age must take only a few words at a time ; and the extension of experience comes to them through seeing and touching and doing more than through listening to words. But soon we reach a level where stories are loved, and here the teacher's long practice in story-telling will begin.

I hope we shall not confine ourselves to the Bible for our material, though the Bible no doubt will be our chief single source. For young children we shall choose chiefly the tales about children, and when we tell of the great Helper and Healer it will be particularly his dealings with children that we shall present. If we tell some of the parables, it will be simply as beautiful stories told by him, and we shall not trouble

our hearers to recognize hidden meanings. Anything puzzling or distressing we shall avoid or undertone. Children vary immensely in sensitiveness, and we must watch the temper of our particular class. If we find that even one child is heartbroken over Joseph in the pit, we shall keep on the safe side for the rest of the year.

The time for tales of heroic adventure comes chiefly from eight to ten. A class will be ready now for longer stories, going on from one lesson to another, and for a connected series of stories, and for biographies of heroes. The Old Testament will probably provide more material than the New, since it belongs to a more primitive and a less subtle age; but we shall tell it in the light of the New, making clear from the beginning, whenever it is necessary, that in some respects men's thoughts have changed and advanced since those ancient times.[1] The great parables will now be told in their setting, as tales arising out of an actual situation in the life of Christ, told to a definite audience, and referring to that audience, or to definite persons or classes of persons known to them and to him. A few years later in the upper standards the children may be ready to discuss the application of a parable to modern life and to their own lives. But by that age we are passing out of the time for telling stories, and we must first discuss the details of that art.

[1] This matter is discussed further in Chapter VI.

2.

The younger the class, the more certain it will be that Bible stories cannot be told just as they stand. Even in the Old Testament, and still more in the New, they are set down briefly and weightily, for the benefit, not of children, but of grown-up people. For children we must expand them and fill them with detail, and if the teacher is to do this he must take much time to prepare. If our knowledge is slight we must seek out sources of information ; if our imagination is slow we shall do well to seek the comments of persons more gifted than ourselves. When the following passage, for instance, struck me as something quite new, I realized with what dull imagination I must always have read the account : " It is flying in the face of all probability to suppose that the disciples gathered for the Last Supper in the assurance that, whatever happened to the Master, they for their part would come safely out of the affair. More probably they thought it was the last meal they would take in this world."[1]

In one way or another we must brood over our chosen story until it grows full and comes alive to ourselves. We must place ourselves amongst the actors ; we must try to see with their eyes and hear with their ears until the incidents move before us in a series of pictures, each passing smoothly into the next. We must go

[1] L. P. Jacks, *Hibbert Journal,* April, 1925.

still deeper, thinking with the actors' minds and feeling with their hearts. We must be able to say to ourselves: "Thus and thus it must have been." All this must be done *before* we enter on the second stage—of considering how to present the story to the class.

By this time we have the indispensable equipment of background, of "knowing" more than we need to tell. What we choose to tell will depend on the previous equipment of the class, their character, and their age. For little children we shall make most of the details of action; description of places and of feeling will mean less to them. With the juniors we may linger more on manners and customs and vivid details of the foreign and far-away life; with the seniors we may venture on a background of scenery and history. The younger the hearers, the more needful it will be to get our actors on the stage at once, and to set things happening without delaying over introduction or preliminary descriptions. We must make the persons speak, using direct rather than "reported" speech. (Our best models will be the folk-tales, perfected by generations of being told to children.) Work up to your climax as deliberately as you like, and from the climax come quickly to the end, and then have a pause. Do not be afraid, either, of pauses during the story. You will come better and better to feel the attention of your audience, and to know what can be done with it. Never hurry; if one incident provides enough to keep attention for the whole lesson, it is all the better; the rest

of the tale can wait for next time. Only be so well prepared that you always have more in hand and always know where you are going.

This brings us to the question of verbal preparation. Most story-tellers and lecturers of experience advise that (except for the first sentence and the last sentence) we should *not* try to learn by heart what we are going to say. Rather, they suggest, we should make the series of scenes pass again and again before our mental eye until we have complete command over them, and then most of our words may be produced at the moment of speaking. This is not inconsistent with a further piece of advice—that we should also practise telling the story aloud. The words may vary and be improved each time of telling, without any rote-memorizing stage. These rehearsals, mental and vocal, should be spaced out. We economize our time best by returning to our subject again and again rather than by sitting at it (once the main creative work of imagination is done).

Where a beginner finds putting into words exceedingly difficult, and also finds it very difficult to rehearse aloud in an empty room, his best plan may often be to write out the story in full beforehand as he means to tell it, and then to read it to himself at intervals several times, pronouncing the words inwardly if not aloud. But even then, when the lesson-time comes, he must not set out to recite something learnt by heart; he must forget himself and his preparation altogether, and plunge boldly into telling what he

sees in the words that *come*. Probably those words will often be the same as the words he wrote, but about this he must not now care at all.

Provided we do our best every time, all of us can count on steady improvement in this matter of speech. The difficulties arising from nervous self-consciousness, felt by so many beginners, will also subside to a reasonable level for most of us by dint of practice, and nothing but practice will do it. "When first I started teaching," writes one person thus troubled, ". . . no matter how well I knew a story, I simply could not tell it to the children. I might start very well and go on for a while until I became conscious of all those eyes staring at me ; then the story would go clean out of my mind, and I'd have to finish from the book. For most stories this did not matter ; they could be read as effectively as told ; but Scripture stories were different. I only had the Bible, and I soon found out that for little children simply reading from the Bible was not sufficient. . . . To overcome this difficulty I wrote the story beforehand in simple straightforward language, making it as interesting as I could. Then when the lesson came I read the story as I had written it, sometimes putting simple sketches on the board for illustration. . . . Gradually I learnt to do without reading the stories. At first I kept the story in my hand and only looked at it when necessary, and in a few months' time I could stand and tell the story easily."

This teacher's experience raises one very pertinent and controversial question. Must we

always "tell" our stories, as so many books on method seem to assume? Or may we read them? The present writer has no hesitation in holding that good reading is very much better, in the normal case, than inferior telling; and that good telling, with stories that we have to fill in and word for ourselves, needs so much work, and even then depends so much on a natural and cultivated gift, that we are not only justified in taking advantage of other people's work, but really bound to take that advantage when we can. When Bible stories, for instance, have been so admirably re-written as we find them in Mr. Robert Bird's books,[1] I should most certainly read them aloud. Naturally they must not be read with one's eyes fastened to the book; we must know them well beforehand, and we must so hold the book or so arrange our reading-desk that we can be looking at the class quite half the time with very little movement of our eyes. This removes the deadness and lack of touch which is the really great objection to some kinds of reading aloud.

Only in one case does it seem necessary to rule out reading. When we have a difficult and disorderly new class, which is also very insensitive at present to the difference between good

[1] Robert Bird: "One Hundred Bible Stories for Children," "Jesus the Carpenter of Nazareth," "John the Companion of Jesus," "Paul of Tarsus," "Joseph the Dreamer." All published by Nelson. The last three unfortunately are out of print.

and bad wording, then probably we had better "tell" at any cost. We must keep the maximum of touch with them even at the price of giving them rather poor stuff to listen to. All we can do is to make it as good as we can, and hope soon to improve the state of affairs.

3.

Whether we tell or read, it is a good principle to have the source of our story always in evidence, for the children's association and future use. In one large infants' school the teachers are required to have the Bible in their hands and to show it, even for classes that cannot read. Bible words, especially the speeches, should be introduced if possible amongst our own. And the full Bible version may be read by teacher or children, either at the end of the same lesson or at the beginning of the next. The only thing we must not do is to begin with the Bible and then proceed to our own version; both would be spoilt.

As to pictures and other illustrations, every age that profits by hearing a story will also profit by seeing these; and the teacher must prepare them as carefully as he prepares the telling. The picture may be introduced at the beginning of a story or before its beginning (it may sometimes be fastened on the wall some days before). This has the advantage that the children's own visualization of the scene will be adjusted from the first. If, however, we decide to begin by letting

their imagination have free play, then we had better show our picture only after they have made their own attempts at illustration on paper. "You have shown how you think of the scene; this is what somebody else thought." If we possess different versions by different artists, this plan enables us to use and compare them all. The middle course of showing illustrations *during* the story will seldom be advisable—hardly ever except to explain some simple matter newly mentioned. We should let the story go its own way without breaking its thread.

4.

There is one thing worse than breaking the thread of a story, and that is anti-climax; and the commonest anti-climax consists in questioning by the teacher. We may question before the story, to prepare its way, and we may question in the next lesson, if we ask what should be asked; but even the best questions are out of place when the telling is just finished. And when the questions are not the best but the worst, our sin is deep indeed. "Above all," writes Miss Cather, "do not tell a story that delights a boy or girl and then kill the whole effect by saying: 'Now, Peter, what does that story teach you?'"

If our listeners do not enter into the teaching, feeling the soul of a story as well as its external form, then either we have told it badly or else

we have chosen a story unsuited to their stage of development. I can think of only one excusable use for "What does that teach you?" When we are doubtful of the suitability of some tale, we may now and then allow ourselves to use this question as a test, setting it an hour or two after the lesson, to be answered in ten minutes of writing. If the children fail in their answers, we shall not spend much time in discussing or correcting, but shall rather postpone this story to the next standard in future years. In no other case shall we ask the question. "My experience," says a teacher, "is that a child is quite as quick as an adult to seize a moral, and that a class hates to be reminded of the obvious." Moreover, surely the teaching *is* the story, and it cannot be put so well in any other words. Nearly all of us are the better for reading a great poem; nearly all would be the worse for being required to put into a sentence "what it teaches."

When the story is ended the teacher (so to speak) should step back. The best sequence is a short pause, for relaxation and for letting the impression sink in,[1] and then (in this lesson or the next) the children's turn for activity.

[1] Whatever form the particular Scripture lesson may have taken, a pause should divide it from the period which follows. A lesson should not end like one which has been described to me: "Jesus said, I am the Son of God. Hands down. Sit up nicely. Get out your arithmetic-books."

CHAPTER IV

THE CHILDREN'S PART

1.

INFANTS' teachers more than others have it impressed on them that their pupils will not learn or enjoy or remember well unless they have plenty of active things to do. Infants' schools, therefore, have been fertile in devising occupations—"expression work" or "meditation work"—which keep the children still engaged with the story they have heard. "If we speak of the sower, we make his field in the sand-tray, plough it with a cardboard plough, and see the sower start off with his bag." "We make models of the houses, sheepfolds, etc., in cardboard; the people of plasticine, or sticks draped with brightly coloured tinsel paper; the trees of crinkled paper on sticks. The children make most of the things themselves." "We cut out models, sometimes putting the figures on cardboard and making them stand, and sometimes pasting them on black paper to form a frieze." Four-year-olds cut and fold squares of paper to make flat-roofed houses, and "a hole cut in the flat roof and an egg-shell pushed in makes an admirable dome for a temple." "Models of Eastern homes and tents, synagogues, workshops, are made; using clay,

wood, paper, wool, match-boxes, sand, soil, or grass; in the window-sill if a model-tray cannot be obtained." "When our children take the story of David the shepherd they make the shepherd's crook, his leather bag, his club, and his sling. They find great delight in making things mentioned in the story, and gain a far clearer view of it."

"This Christmas we built a model in the big sand-tray in the hall, with the help of the children of five and six years old. The tray is about five by three and a half feet. There was a background of blue paper on which were stuck a great many stars, cut out of silver paper by the children. Four pictures of angels were fastened on this background, and hills were indicated. The background fitted down into the back of the sand-tray, and the sand was heaped up to touch it and to form the hills outside Bethlehem. On the hills we put a sheepfold (modelled from thin grey cardboard), many sheep (some toy ones and some pictures mounted on cardboard), and the shepherds (also pictures mounted on cardboard) grouped round the fire and gazing towards the angelic host. The fire consisted of a little paraffin oil-stove, which was buried in the sand so that only the burning wick showed. The children were delighted with the fire, and one boy insisted that we must add some wild animals, as the fire was there to frighten them away. So two toy bears were found and put on the hills. The front of the tray represented part of Beth-

lehem. The walls of the town were formed by box lids ; the gateway cut out of cardboard ; the houses made by the children out of stiff white wallpaper. Palm-trees also were made, while the well was composed of glass over blue paper and surrounded by wooden bricks. Paths were indicated by white sand, grass by sawdust dyed green. I am sure that the general effect helped the children in their understanding of the story."

The most universal form of such illustration consists in the sketches made with coloured chalk, by which each child represents some part of the story which he would have liked to see, or something which he imagines the characters would do next. In this kind of work we shall not lay too much stress on archæological correctness. If the reformed prodigal wears a modern hat as he runs an errand for his father, this is a detail which acquaintance with Eastern pictures will soon obliterate, and the spirit of the scene is not far wrong.

A few teachers are troubled by another side of the question. "After a sympathetic telling of one of the poignant stories in the life of our Lord," writes one, "it jars me to see the children settle down with papers and crayons, plasticine or pencils, to record their crude and childish ideas. It seems to destroy that reverence one has sought to inculcate." On the whole, I think that this is the reverence of Deuteronomy rather than the Gospels. One can hardly imagine Jesus disapproving of his portrait being drawn by a

child. Still, we may treat different stories in different ways as we think most fitting. And of course we shall never demand this exercise where the child himself has grown old enough to feel that his attempts are inadequate and crude. Then we shall suggest the drawing or modelling of objects rather than free illustration.

Most of the kinds of handwork described just now can be introduced in the junior school if the infant school has not used them. A junior also will copy charts and make diagrams and maps as well as models; "anything," as Mr. Archibald says, "that will help him to get a clear understanding of the matter in hand." At this age, further, we can draw upon the inexhaustible instinct of making collections. At eight or nine or ten years old one may construct a portfolio or a Commonplace Book, or a Sunday Anthology of poems, or a collection of favourite Bible passages beautifully printed and illuminated, or a Sunday scrap-book, or a "Book about the Bible." Or the delightfulness of important and active beneficence can be experienced, since the scrap-book may finally be sent to a children's hospital, or a Christmas book may be made for father and mother, or for the infants' school. Utilitarians of ten and eleven may be perfectly happy in making a set of big maps or models for the use of their class or of the class below, or of future generations in school.[1]

[1] "The less maps are elaborated the better—a two-penny paint-brush dipped in the ink-pot gives the best

Such work may take the place of a story or prepare the way for one instead of always following it. It may well occupy, with some classes, the equivalent of one or two lessons a week and even more. If any teachers ask, What about the examination? they are requested to re-read pages 20-21 of this book; and to look ahead to page 61.

2.

Another most natural kind of expression or meditation work is the oral sort. Its simplest form grows normally out of a pause in the story: "What do you think they would do next?"[1] Or the finished story may be retold by the children, an exercise on which the Board's remarks are worth remembering. In junior classes, they recommend, "the child's efforts at continuous narration should be interrupted as little as possible by correction of his language. The teacher should be reluctant, save in the case of glaring vulgarisms, to check the use of

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outline and the right amount of detail." "The easiest way to enlarge a map is to transfer it from the atlas to squared paper . . . and to rule your cartridge-paper in squares to correspond." (H. M. Madeley: "History as a School of Citizenship.")

[1] "At 9 or 10, 'questioning out' is a good substitute for narrative when traversing arid tracts. To reconstruct the course of events by question and answer is quite an exhilarating form of mental gymnastic, but the teacher needs careful preparation." (H. M. Madeley, *op. cit.*)

the language of the home, which will often be curiously mixed with language derived from the story or book. . . . It is only on the basis of home speech that any genuine and natural progress can be made."[1] I shall urge later on that in the divinity lesson retelling should be voluntary, not expected from every child.

Narration passes easily into dramatizing (though another beginning may be made with wordless acting of suitable stories). One school begins by dramatizing missionary stories ; another takes the Parable of the Talents. Classes of infants sometimes learn to dramatize easily and beautifully without any elaborate training, but as the children grow older more formulation will be needed. The teacher may discuss with the class the division of scenes and may collect suggestions of lines and sentences. Groups or individuals may produce alternative versions of a scene, or a scene each. Caldwell Cook's "Playway" contains an admirable account of boys' work on the story of the spies. Plays on Bible subjects are published, but unless these are simply plays in Bible words we shall probably be safest in following the general rule—that what is acted in school should be either the work of reasonably great writers or else the work of the children themselves.

Dramatizing again passes into pageant, with less drama but more help from scenery, costume,

[1] "Suggestions for the Consideration of Teachers in Elementary Schools," p. 25.

and music. If music is very well taught the children may profit by making their own tunes; otherwise good composers should be called in.

3.

Narration on another side blends with reading aloud made as good as possible, and raises the question of the children's use of Bibles. There is no doubt that Bibles in sufficient number, in either a full or (preferably) a children's version, should be available whenever they are needed. If this is impossible, at any rate cheap paper-covered copies of separate books should be obtained.[1] Having them available, we should deliberately *not* use them every day, with the juniors at any rate. ("The same prayers at the opening and closing of each school day, the same few hymns repeated, and to enter the classroom in the morning and always be sure of finding a big black Bible waiting for one on the desk, made me absolutely hate the Scripture lesson.") Rather their use should be made into a pleasant and stimulating privilege, which in most schools seems quite possible. "With every class," writes one teacher, "I notice brightened eyes and a whisper of 'Oo-oo, Bibles!' when they are given out." Another: "Each boy I have, who can read at all, wants to read his bit aloud,

[1] The Bible Society issues single Gospels for a half-penny, New Testaments for 2d., and Old Testament books or groups of books for 3d. each.

and I'm told next time: 'Please, miss, it's my turn to start to-day.'" Another: "Even the most halting readers want to read, and would never confess that they had the slightest difficulty with the language." But the reading should not usually be halting; the person who wants to read can prepare and thoroughly rehearse beforehand the passage assigned to him.

Most of the reports sent me seem to show that the archaic language is not a great difficulty. But so long as it presents any difficulty at all it provides an additional reason for the rule of making Bible reading, not the beginning of a lesson, but its final outcome.[1] Not till Standard V. or VI., probably, shall we find it well to begin a subject with open Bibles.

The outcome may be, not reading aloud, but reading to oneself. "One method of closing a lesson which I found interested the children very much was to ask them to look up some passage at home for the next lesson." "My children often read to themselves at home the Bible stories which have been told to them. They sometimes say to me apropos of some detail, 'Wasn't it so-and-so?' and I reply: 'Suppose you look it up.'" "I have always made a point of letting the children read the Bible to illustrate my points, and see for themselves where the differences are in the various accounts of a happening, and to get behind the thought of that particular writer. We read the accounts of

[1] See page 33.

the same story in all the Gospels in which it is found, and try to imagine the man who wrote it. I feel sure that my present class have quite a definite picture of Matthew, Peter and Mark, Luke and John, and their various characteristics. I often find, too, that if I begin a story from the New Testament the children, the same evening, try to find the accounts of it, and can tell me next morning what Mark tells and Matthew leaves out, and so on."

Finally, profitable interconnections may arise. "They occasionally come and say, 'May we read such-and-such a story?'—things which have been touched upon at Sunday-school or mentioned in the Vicar's sermon. If a story is alluded to, and they are not familiar with it, they want to read it."

4.

"I am sure," writes the mistress of a small country school, "it is better to give much reading and allow questions than to give lessons. I have seen children who alternated between two teachers settle down in obvious satisfaction with the second one, and say: 'I like reading the Bible.' The first teacher talked, and the children did not; the second teacher allowed them to read, and they talked. . . . My pupils prefer to take an active part in the lessons. I think that whenever questions (from the children) come spontaneously the work is more likely to be productive. The older children have just

embarked upon the Sermon on the Mount. We read the first chapter, questions being reserved until the reading was finished. Then the children asked questions about anything they did not understand. The questions were so comprehensive that, when they were all answered, no further explanation was needed. Then I asked questions, and as I found they had understood all that was possible, we passed on to the next chapter. We have read the three chapters in this way, and I am now going to prepare lessons on the various parts of the Sermon. The questions were numerous, one difficulty being that the children are rather too engrossed in their own difficulties to listen to explanations of other children's questions, and explanations have to be repeated occasionally."

Such question and discussion lessons are admirable when good, but they are not always easy to manage. They belong chiefly to the elder pupils; below Standard V. I should say that ethical teaching must usually be cast in story form, and that discussions will be incidental and brief. Again, in a large class not all questioners can get a turn, and even in a middle-sized class the questioning may slide by habit into the hands of a minority. Also where the difficulties are miscellaneous the lesson may become too aimless and desultory. An excellent teacher of secular literature advises that the children's questions should nearly always be put down in writing and given in, to be dealt with

in the next lesson. In this way (1) we can require, if we think well, that everybody should contribute at least a minimum number of questions; (2) we can prepare ourselves to praise specially good questions, and to turn back on the questioner any that are frivolous or foolish; (3) we can group them according to subject, dealing first (*e.g.*) with language difficulties and then with subject-matter; (4) we can decide on various methods of getting them answered, drawing in the children to help wherever possible, and so giving them interest in one another's questions. Such a lesson may well lead up to group investigations or group discussions, the small groups reuniting with their contributions. Some questions, on the other hand, may lead you to invite the questioner to come to you for private talk.

"I think it is obvious," writes the country schoolmistress quoted before, "that in discussion questions must often be left open; the teacher must be willing to accept any thoughtful view." If the inquirer honestly wants to know the teacher's private opinion, it may sometimes be given privately if not in open class. But in controversial matters we may sometimes think it best to content ourselves with giving a fair statement of the chief alternative views (after the class has had its own discussion), and so leaving the matter for later thought and growth.

With senior classes we should not be afraid of enlarging our field. The leaving class in one rural school studies the outline of the history

of religion, and is keenly interested in lessons on the religions of the world. And if a serious discussion prospers we need not mind discursiveness too much. Here are a few remembrances from elementary and from secondary schools :

"Often the Head would wander from the subject he was explaining and tell us interesting details about the Bible and its stories, or we might enter upon a discussion of some problem. I remember his once asking us, 'What do you think heaven is?' and the next week we gained new thoughts on death and the soul. Such discussions were of great value to us. We were indeed learning 'new thoughts of God, new hopes of heaven.'"

"This teacher allowed us to discuss questions which arose in our study, and we did this quite freely and sensibly. No doubt we were in no position to argue with one of so much more experience than ourselves, but once we had seen the reason or need for a principle we were more likely to adopt it than if we had just been told it by an older person. We studied the epistles of James and Peter, and if we were not always able to carry out what we learnt, we at least desired to do so, and were fired with admiration of noble characters."

"In the Fourth Form many of us were experiencing the usual adolescent questionings towards religion. We asked vague, wild questions of the teacher, such as 'Why is the Bible a holy book?' 'How do we know it's all true?'

'Who made God?' but we were inevitably dragged back to St. Paul and his journeys without being answered. . . . I don't think that one of us had any idea of connecting our Scripture lessons with our own religious experiences, vague and little understood as they probably were. But in the Fifth Form the Scripture period was taken by the headmistress, and the lessons became not only interesting but wonderfully stimulating. At the beginning of each term we were all asked to send in to her three questions which we should like answered, and she arranged her lessons during the term to cover the questions sent in. In this way we were shown the connection between Evolution and Bible teaching; many of us heard about the Buddhist, Hindu, Chinese, and Mahometan religions for the first time; differences between Christianity and other religions were pointed out. We learnt things which had been puzzling our minds for a long time, and, moreover, we were shown the direction in which to search for truth for ourselves ''

5.

Side by side with the use of speech and conversation there grows the use of writing. Written expression and preparation must do service in this study as in others, from the time the children can write at all. From this time onwards writing may always be allowed as an alternative to handwork; for just as some pupils, even at fourteen,

can draw a scene better and more easily than they can describe it, so others, even at eight years old, can describe a picture or a model which they could not make. A story at first may be written out as it has been told; later on it may be written from another point of view, as told by one of the characters or by an onlooker. Afterwards, as the Board's suggestions recommend, "specimens of these exercises can be read aloud,[1] and each group learns something from the other's attempt as well as from its own. . . . Nor must the teacher forget that he can do much more than teach English by the judicious use of exercises of this type; by developing the imaginative powers of his children he is teaching them to put themselves in other people's places, to realize that there are more sides than one to every question, and by so doing he can help to lay the foundations of sympathy, toleration, justice, and other essentially social virtues."

Good apparatus for guiding individual written work is published by some of the denominational societies. The National Society's "Self-Teaching" equipment for juniors and seniors is well worth examining, and even an infants' teacher reports her use of the same Society's "Gospel Pictures." "Set I. is a series of pictures with a piece of corresponding transcription; this is easy for Class I. Set II. is a series of pictures with corresponding questions. Quick children

[1] Always provided they are not of a private nature.

in Standard I. are keen to get theirs answered before the hands of the clock reach half-past nine. Of course, time must be found to correct individual work, or it will tend to be slipshod."

Except for small children, there will be no need to limit a composition to what can be written in one period; it may well run on. The older the class, the more thought, or the more investigation, should be involved. Where several people are working on the same question, collective discussion and contribution may precede the individual work. The following are selected from a number of specimen questions which have struck me as good:

"The Emmaus disciples 'told what had happened in the way.' Write down what they said."

"After an Easter lesson, choose the best message for an Easter card."

"Write a concluding chapter to the story of the Prodigal Son."

"Write an answer to the Epistle to Philemon."

"What would Amos preach about if he came to our town?"

From "Present-Day Problems in Religious Teaching," by Hetty Lee.

"Write a prayer which someone in this story might have used."

"What verse in the Beatitudes reminds you most of the story we have heard?"

For boys of twelve who have debated the conduct of the Master of the Vineyard: "Would you like, when you go out to work, to serve under this master?"

From "I Thought as a Child," by S. Longman.

"Why do you go to church?"

"Write a letter to Miss Loo in China, in answer to one asking for an account of the Book of Psalms."

"If a boy tells a lie and is not found out, will he be punished? If so, give details."

"Say what the parable of the Prodigal Son teaches you (*a*) about God, (*b*) about yourself."[1]

From "The Child's Knowledge of God," by Rev. T. Grigg-Smith.

"The relations between the Jews and the Romans, illustrated by the life of Jesus or of Paul."

"The importance of the position of Palestine on the great trade routes."

From "Method in Religious Teaching," by Mildred Field.

"How can you keep the Fourth Commandment now, and how do you hope to keep it when you grow up?"

"What would happen if next week everybody forgot the Eighth Commandment?"

[1] On this type of question, see p. 35.

"Write a story about the different hearers described in the Parable of the Sower."

"Find out all you can about the road to Babylonia, and what the Exiles would see on the way. Describe the settlement of one group at the end."

Some of these questions require no books except the Bible, and some not even this ; our choice of others will depend largely on what books we have been able to procure for our own use and the children's. A choice of question should nearly always be given. Large classes are an inevitable handicap, and most use of written work seems to be made by some teachers in charge of rural schools—a real advantage of the small school to set against its many disadvantages. But the arguments for writing are so strong that I hope no school will neglect it altogether.

6.

One should not need to emphasize the importance of including much and varied expression-work in every part of a school course ; yet in reading reports on the divinity lesson from a hundred different schools I have been greatly struck by the differences in the extent to which expression-work is used—from a great deal down to nothing. Occasionally the letters show a curious characteristic, in that a teacher who is doing all kinds of good things seems to feel that she must make an apology for them. One in a

central school, for instance, regrets the poverty of the syllabus prescribed for her girls of ten and eleven years old, and adds (italics mine) : "*As an antidote to monotony and to fill in time,* I have had recourse to geographical background lessons ; to the (optional) making of Scripture anthologies and scrap-books, in which the children write their favourite hymns and passages from the Bible, paste in Biblical pictures and illustrated text-cards, etc. ; the writing of original Christmas carols ; the giving of occasional lecturettes by children who have seen Biblical films or visited the cathedrals ; the recitation by volunteers of Bible passages not familiar to the rest of the class ; the writing and impromptu acting of plays based on Biblical incidents ; the reading of poems on Bible subjects ; interesting written exercises ; question games between teams ; and once a term we have a free-choice lesson where the children may do anything they choose that has some connection with Scripture. . . . I have found it sometimes adds zest to Bible study to provide an aim for it other than the usual 'learning the story,'—to ask the children to find passages they would like to hear read as the lesson that forms part of the school prayers, or to find favourite passages and compare later with others' choice ; or to make out a list of questions for a rival team to answer ; or even to select texts which would form a good subject for a sermon, or which they would like to see on a classroom wall."

Much and varied work by the children would seem to form one necessary means for combating that danger of weariness which is apt to become so formidable near the top of the school. "When I get the children," writes one teacher, "they have spent thirty minutes per day five days per week for seven years hearing and reading the same stories over and over again." "It is fatal," writes another, "to let this familiarity of subject-matter depress one. One must forget that the stories are old and well known, and act on the assumption that they are wonderfully interesting. . . . It is a good plan to approach such stories from fresh angles; for instance, in the Feeding of the Five Thousand, begin with the little boy who went out picnicking." This is good, but often a point may be reached at which the teacher had better not tell the story at all, but rather hand it over to the children. It may be their task to prepare and tell it from the different standpoint; or it may be written or dramatized; or sometimes beautifully read aloud, the children choosing the best readers, and these rehearsing beforehand. Or it may be recalled simply by silent reading, and then form a basis for the discussion of some idea. We cannot ourselves insist on being listened to unless we have something fresh to give.

In the foregoing paragraph I have assumed, with my correspondents, that a defective official syllabus is so rigidly enforced that we are obliged to cover the same ground again and again. But

I would repeat emphatically the point made on pages 21-22—that there should be no need for doing this. We have the world's riches to draw upon, and we ought to spend no more time on familiar work than we can spend profitably.

7.

Two other suggestions should perhaps be made before we leave the subject of expression-work. In the first place, if some method is wholly new to the children (as dramatizing, for instance, is new in some schools), we shall probably do well to introduce it first in some other lesson, and reward some level of achievement by deciding that now it may be tried in the Scripture hour. In the second place, if we come new to a school where Scripture has long been a matter of mere routine, we must be prepared to find that the children's minds have enclosed it with that intense conservatism which keeps childish routine sacred. It may be wise to conform to old methods for a time as closely as our conscience allows, till we ourselves have been accepted as part of the law of nature and the furniture of life. Then we may by degrees go forward.

At any rate, we may go forward if we have any reasonable chance, and we may extend true pity to teachers who have none. I thought the depth of difficulty had been reached by one whose Scripture class consisted of "110 children in Standards III. and IV., crowded into a room

with accommodation for 48, and seats into which you might squeeze 72, while the rest had to stand." But even this was surpassed by "four classes, each numbering 50-60, assembled in a room made to hold two classes. Standards IVa and Va consisted of fairly well-behaved children, IVb and Vb of badly behaved. The Head had not much influence with them. They could not all be seated, and there were no hymn-books or Bibles." It must be only dimly consoling in such a state to resolve that at any rate this shall cease in a few years' time when one becomes senior enough to carry weight in school counsels.

Note on Certain Difficulties of Bible Reading.

Biblical plainness of speech gives rise to occasional school difficulties for at least three or four different reasons. (*a*) Some children and most teachers, with modern customs of propriety, find certain passages embarrassing for reading aloud. (*b*) Other children, and even the same children, find a childish adventurous pleasure in seeing these passages in print, and may look them up privately. (*c*) Other passages may be sought through scientific curiosity—the growing boy or girl seeking for information about life. (*d*) In a few schools it will be found that this curiosity is already squalid and tainted, through bad associations from outside.

These reasons are distinct from one another, and may be taken briefly in turn.

(*a*) The matter of convention is not very important, but certainly we ought so to arrange the lesson beforehand that nobody is made uncomfortable. The Bible version of the stories concerned need not be read aloud in class.

(*b*) The adventurous pleasure also should not be regarded too seriously. Most of us have looked up these verses in our time, and this kind of adventure soon wears out if it is not made exciting in another way by being treated as a school offence. One teacher has found it helpful, "when a suitable occasion presents itself, to speak to the whole class on the changeableness of standards, referring to Shakespeare and the Bible as examples. If children are talked to as reasonable and sensible beings about such things I find they usually respond very well."

(*c*) The search for knowledge raises the whole question of giving information about vital matters, especially the facts of sex. My own strong opinion is that when children seek this information they should be given it freely, though it is wise and fair to get leave from parents first. Whether it should be given privately or in class, and whether in this lesson or in another, we cannot prescribe by any general rule. But the provision of opportunity for asking questions privately in writing should be specially useful to boys and girls at this stage of their inquiries.

(*d*) The really great difficulty, where it occurs,

is that of the tainted atmosphere; and this has its background in the whole tone of the district. It may be that years of work will be needed in a slum or a suburb or occasionally in a village—years of improving bad conditions, raising general education, introducing better enjoyments, opening the windows of the mind—before twelve-year-old children in this school can read tranquilly some beautiful story of love or birth. We must work from a wide base and with endless patience. So far as this book goes, we can add nothing more except that probably a lesson will be better omitted if its religious value is choked by the complexes aroused in the pupils' minds.

CHAPTER V

TWO SIDES OF A QUESTION

A.—Memory Work

1.

Let us begin with some reminiscences :

"We had well-known passages of Scripture to learn by heart ; the Sermon on the Mount, for instance, and various psalms. To one with a bad memory such as mine this procedure is most distressing. The torture inflicted in learning, or in fearing that you have not learnt it, prejudices the sufferer against that particular passage for the rest of his life. And since it is the most beautiful passages that are thus selected, much more harm is done than good."

"Friday morning was terrible. For people with a poor memory for psalms, etc., it was almost as bad as a nightmare. We never had the slightest idea what the repetition meant, and we were all terrified at not being able to say it when we were asked. Why this should be so I do not know clearly, as we were not punished at all if we were unable to repeat it."

"Even to this day, when the Commandments are read in church, my thoughts go back to Friday mornings, and the strain of having to write a commandment without mistake."

"Those long periods when we sat staring at our Bibles, vainly endeavouring to memorize long passages, with the thought of punishment ahead for those who failed, were equally monotonous, boring, and fatiguing. Though since those days I have frequently applied myself for various reasons to learn the Ten Commandments, I could not now repeat them word for word, in spite of the fact that as a child I memorized well."

"I can still repeat Samuel's orations to Saul, and the Beatitudes, word for word. The memorizing work soon became irksome, and later sickening."

"Most of what I now remember has been associated with feelings of boredom and dislike, having been learnt in an atmosphere of drill and of fear, and I have had difficulty in later years in arousing interest in it. This again, I think, is due to having been compelled to learn such passages perfectly, in view of the yearly examination. One teacher advised her class to learn the punctuation also, and I well remember my mother's horror when she heard my sister saying in one breath: 'Let not your heart be troubled semicolon ye believe in God comma believe also in me full stop.'"

"When one has to learn like a parrot, one soon gets to hate the very words."

"I think I can say with truth that my religious training at school was of practically no value to me except that now I know a few hymns and verses by heart, and these I hate because I was so miserable when learning them."

2.

When I have suggested to middle-aged persons that "religious repetition" may be doing more harm than good, I have often found that vehement opposition is aroused. They reply that children memorize easily and do not mind it, that it is good discipline, and that the memorized words benefit them in later days. I do not presume to deny that this may be so with some children. I would only urge very seriously that we should guard against abuse, and that every head teacher ought to make sure that abuses are not found in his own school.

To take first the question of external examination. The external examiner may be far from being a tyrant, even where tradition has led schools to prepare for him as if he were tyrannical; nevertheless, I think we ought everywhere to substitute inspection for examination, pressing for the change, if necessary, through the local organization of teachers. The weighty authority of the National Society can on the whole be claimed for this side; and the excellent diocesan syllabus for Derbyshire schools expressly bids the teachers remember that the children are not being prepared for an examination. Where a local authority still enforces examination on its council schools, I believe it is often only through force of habit, and that the arrangement could easily be changed.

Once the external examination is removed, and intelligent inspection provided instead, the ques-

tion of memorizing may be intelligently dealt with. I do not suggest that the exercise should be abolished, but only that aims and methods should be carefully thought out, and (I think this is indispensable) that a child who specially dislikes it, and would rather do written work or handwork, should be allowed the alternative. The knowledge of the alternative's existence will ease the strain for many children who do not actually choose it.

"The vital matter," say the compilers of the West Riding syllabus, "is that in memorizing the teacher should have the goodwill and the pleasurable co-operation of the class." We have two dangers to guard against—boredom and nervous anxiety. Both should be diminished by the plan just advised—that those who find memorizing specially distasteful should have other work to do. Against boredom, further, we may work by getting the learning partly done in the service of other purposes. The children who make and illustrate their own books of texts and psalms will know a good deal by heart at the end. Dramatic work and pageant work, however simple, will involve some learning by heart, with other associations than weariness. A good deal can be done by discussion and reading aloud. One teacher of Standard V. describes her method as follows: "Early in each term I selected a number of suitable portions, and told my pupils that we would choose parts of these to learn; as a preliminary we would read them

all through. I read some, and various pupils read others. Then we talked of them, and I encouraged the children to be interested in them by asking them to pick out special verses they liked in each psalm or chapter. This they were very ready to do. (In later lessons we were able to classify the psalms roughly into songs of praise, descriptions of nature, battle hymns, etc.) Then we did the actual learning by means of members of the class getting up and reading their own particular favourites. In this way we had variety, repetition, and all the class co-operating; and it worked very well indeed." A teacher of infants, dealing with Psalm xxiii, "first told the children many stories about David and his doings and how he used to make up songs. Then I explained how these songs had been written down but that we'd forgotten the tunes David made and had only the words. Then I explained the psalm to them; they understood it and learnt it practically in one lesson, and they were children of five and six years old." With a different view of authorship we might have to modify the details of this, but the spirit is right.

I do not altogether rule out the old plan of collective repetition, if for any reason we have decided that the same passage must be learnt by all the class. It has obvious dangers, but it can be practised as a real work of art, and a fine passage spoken in chorus may appeal more sometimes to the individual speaker than if he listened to another or repeated the words by him-

self. One student who "loved repetition days at school" describes how "the whole class would half chant long passages from the Bible. I remember now the feeling of pleasure when a string of particularly beautiful words would come tripping over our tongues."

As for the lessening of nervous strain, it seems simplest normally to remove the paralyzing prospect of having to reproduce the passage alone and out of reach of the book. Professional actors have to face this as an incident in their work, and unless they can face it they will not become actors. But is there really any strong reason why children should face it (further than, *e.g.*, dramatic work requires)? What we want, presumably, is to make great passages so familiar and so friendly to a child that in after years the words will come easily to his mind and bring good and happy thoughts with them. Why not usually leave the book in his hand? encouraging him to keep his eyes off it as much as possible, but making no crime of the occasional need of looking down at the page. In prose and verse, religious and secular alike, I believe that both reading aloud and recitation would profit greatly if the traditional hard line between them were to be wiped out.

3.

B.—The Devotional Side.

We try by such means to diminish weariness and anxiety because we feel these states of mind

to be undesirable in any lesson, and particularly undesirable in this lesson, which we wish to make not only a lesson about God but itself an experience of God. Religious instruction is not to be behind other lessons in absorbed work and keen thinking, but if possible it is to be happier than any other lesson, and its atmosphere more harmonious. We foster religious life not only by explicit instruction, but by a mass of association which will tell in after years. "The big Bible," in the infant experience of some of us, is bound up with some half-hour in happy Sunday evenings, with clean pinafores and the firelight, and father or mother at leisure to attend to us. Christmas memories are concerned not only with doctrine or with good news out of the past, but with present joy and with making others happy. And many members of the S.C.M. will know how the power of the "morning watch" is clothed with the beauty and quiet of the early hour.

"In a very dreary school in the winter," writes one teacher, "I often found that even to light the gases with the avowed intention of warming the room for Scripture had the right effect, even if they had to be turned out and the room made dismal for arithmetic." In the customary 9—9.30 period most schoolrooms can be tidy and relatively clean, the air can be fresh, and hands newly washed. The disadvantage of this hour is its interruption by late comers, a handicap which at any rate in infants' schools it may be almost

impossible in some districts to remove. In such cases I should be strongly disposed myself to abandon this time, and to take the divinity lesson at the end of the morning or at the beginning or end of the afternoon.

To the same end of right atmosphere we direct arrangements which may make this lesson pleasanter and more Sunday-like than the rest. We allow choice between different kinds of expression-work; we make "telling back" voluntary instead of compulsory; we get over the confusions of a new experiment in some other lesson before we try it here. A special expansion for personality may be found in ownership or quasi-ownership. If there are Bibles enough to go round, and if a child will make a pretty cover for one of them, that Bible may be counted his own so long as he stays in the class or in the school. If there are not enough to go round, it may be appropriated to a group or "house." Portfolios and expression-books may all be individual and different, and a happy hour may be spent periodically on decorating pages or completing some unfinished work of the past. In well-to-do districts most of the class will possess Sunday books which they will be proud to bring to school and lend to the teacher. A story read to the class from such a book, or a picture shown, will gain a special halo for its owner. Still another most valuable asset may be found in a special fellowship of study—fellowship not only with other children but with the teacher. It is

a positive advantage if sometimes the teacher himself is frankly ignorant at the beginning of some investigations which he and the children jointly undertake.

4.

In religious instruction and religious observance alike, anything that ministers to beauty will so far be good. The charming appearance of the Cambridge "Children's Bible" is a great point in its favour, and the ugliness and sliminess and disagreeable smell of many old sets of school Bibles must have told heavily against religion. "I loathed them," says one, remembering, "from the bottom of my soul." Music similarly may hinder as well as help. "When the music began"—in another reminiscence—"each child waited eagerly to count the groans and weird sounds emitted by that wretched and never-ending source of amusement, the harmonium. . . . Morning and evening services were marred by ugliness. . . . Only four hymns were ever sung, in a rotation never varied, because, I heard it said, 'the children know the words.' How I hated those hymns, and how I hate them still!"

Besides monotony and ugliness, some traditional points of discipline may be found to hinder what we seek. I would mention specially the widespread practice by which teachers stand with open eyes at prayers to see that the children's eyes are shut. If we imagine ourselves in grown-

up worship subjected to the same constraint, we can understand the obsession which grows up for many a young child that he must open his eyes "to see what is happening," or "to see how often he can do it without being caught," and the "continual resentment" engendered in an elder boy, because, "although we had to stand with our hands together and our eyes closed, all the masters stood as they pleased and kept their eyes open." Reverence and earnestness surely are better learnt by seeing one's elders reverent and earnest than by keeping one's eyes shut when one wants to open them.

From a school of over four hundred infants in a colliery district the headmistress reports: "We have found Hush Music and Musical Commands very helpful in getting a quiet reverent atmosphere for Assembly. The children march into the hall quite freely; then the hush music is played without anything being said, and it is wonderful how they quieten down. We have a musical command for closing eyes for prayers, and the staff also put their hands together and close their eyes with the little ones. We take prayers very quietly, almost in a whisper. The classes in turn, week by week, make up a prayer of their own, with the help, of course, of the teacher; and twice in the week we have this prayer for Assembly. It is wonderful how interested the children are, and it makes their prayers much more real. The set prayers in the scheme are quite good, but the children are

rather apt to repeat them parrot fashion and think nothing about them."

Another report comes from a small rural school: "Children love ritual and ceremony if they know the reason and feel something symbolic in what they are doing. We have a service once a week, all meeting together. I arrange this usually, trying to concentrate on one idea. If it is a thanksgiving for birds or flowers, we have hymns chosen by the children, and make use of the stories of St. Francis and of his beautiful litany. Once a term the children arrange everything, deciding both on the central idea and on its carrying out. They arranged a beautiful little service based on the thought of a pure heart. They chose passages from the Psalms to be read and recited, and borrowed pictures of Samuel and Sir Galahad and different Madonnas. They carried out a rather intricate ritual which involved the lighting of candles, the wearing of white flowers and ribbons, and the reciting of portions of Malory's *Morte d'Arthur* and Tennyson's *Passing of Arthur.*"[1]

5.

Music, and words set to music, have been used for thousands of years as auxiliaries to

[1] Some teachers of senior schools will be acquainted with Dr. F. H. Hayward's books of School Celebrations. The above is the first example I have met of a celebration devised by the children themselves in an elementary school.

worship, and one set of reminiscences after another bears witness to the child's enjoyment of hymn-singing, and to the regaining in it of a spirit sometimes lost in the ordinary lessons. A cloud falls only when the practice and learning are not kept separate from the devotional use, or when the same hymns are repeated to the point of weariness, or when the school is short of hymn-books and adds the learning of the words to an amount of compulsory memorizing which is too great already.[1] When these dangers are avoided we may rightly make large use of hymns ; nor need our choice be too narrowly restricted. Our literary conscience and our musical conscience should indeed be active, but I do not feel that our rationalistic conscience need insist too minutely that the words should be "suitable for children." An introductory talk about the words of a new hymn will be useful, and the more necessary, the younger the singers. But at any age and with any fine poem we do not ask for complete and literal understanding before we enjoy. Again, we should hesitate long (as was urged in the first chapter) before marking off any part of human experience as a region into which a child cannot enter. And once more, it is the music rather than the verse that has the central part, and the whole has the function of ritual rather than of reasoned discourse. A tiny child, joining with enthusiasm in hymn-singing long

[1] The right course here would seem to be to print the hymn on a sheet to be seen by all.

before she could read, was found to be singing the name of a neighbouring grocer who was her adored friend. Who will say that such a litany had nothing in it of religion?

6.

The rational conscience has a larger part to play in determining the nature and the use of prayer. Where set prayers are used, there should be introductory lessons. Much should be done in encouraging the children themselves to suggest subjects of thanksgiving and petition. They have a right to any help we can give them in guiding their theory of private prayer, and for this purpose it will be very necessary first to make our own thoughts as clear as we can, and then to be true to the best that we can see. What kind of thing do we feel that they and we may ask for, and what kind of answer do we expect to come? Each must think this out for himself if he is to teach the children.

In theory and in practice, however, mere petition must not have the central place. "The little boy who asked to be allowed to repeat a nursery rhyme instead of his usual prayers, on the ground that 'it would amuse Jesus so much,' had surely a truer realization of the meaning of prayer than many an adult."[1] If a child learns to think of prayer as conversation with God,

[1] M. Mackenzie: "Freedom in Education," pp. 116-17.

thanksgiving will take its proper place first, and then he may speak naturally of all his troubles and desires, and of his needs and others' needs for help and comfort, for strengthening and straightening apart from any device of magic for securing private ends. We cannot teach a child to pray that the sun may go ten degrees backwards to extend his birthday, and some of us could not teach him to pray that the rain should cease falling; but we can always teach him to "tell God about it."

7.

Finally, it seems, we need as a fundamental condition that teacher and children should recognize each other as companions in the Way—that we should not be preaching at them from above, but making a pilgrimage along with them. The road is difficult enough for us all at times.

CHAPTER VI

INTELLECTUAL REALITY IN RELIGIOUS TEACHING AND LEARNING

I.

"My woman helper in my home," writes a correspondent, "a girl of average intelligence and about twenty years of age, last week was handling a serviette ring. When I told her that it had come from Jerusalem, she laughed at me. I showed her 'Jerusalem' printed on it, at which she exclaimed in broad Yorkshire dialect: 'Whey, there isn't really a Jerusalem, is there?' 'Well, Evelyn, have all the Scripture lessons at school been lost on you?' 'Whey, I only connected Jerusalem wi' things they tell't us about Jesus Christ. I never thowt it were a real place.'"

The chief requisite for reality in religious instruction no doubt is that for teacher and learner it should connect with a genuine inner experience. But a second requisite surely is that the histories through which it comes should be woven into the rest of our knowledge of the world. We need the vivid and picturesque detail, the means to which we have discussed in former chapters; but isolated vividness may be no more than the vividness of fiction or of a dream. To supplement it

we need a complex connection and interlocking with the wide world of fact and solid belief, the world which extends without a break from the things which our hands now touch and our eyes see.

Means used to make a story vivid may also be used to make it real. "My difficulty," says one teacher, "is to make the characters of the Bible live normal lives, not ordained or mythical. To overcome it I am using pictures, of dress, homes, and country." Such pictures will help to show these characters as persons like ourselves, not comprised within a brief narrative in antique language, but having homes and country and twenty-four hours in their day. If Jerusalem can be photographed, it is so far part of the actual world in which photographs are taken. Again, it is almost a proverbial test of reality to ask whether the place we speak of can be found on a map. Can we find Jerusalem on a map? And to maps we add the invaluable time-charts. The life of St. Paul has hold on a new part of the universe when we have enclosed it within the same lines as that of the Emperor Nero.

Every cross-reference that we can make from one school subject to another will make the world firmer and our way within it surer. Children who have heard of cavemen and hunters and shepherds and wanderers, and have modelled their encampments, will be ready for Abraham and for the wilderness wanderings and the life in tents, and the settling down to farm life in Canaan. When

they have realized through their own suggestions all that these inexperienced cultivators must learn from their Canaanite neighbours, they will be far more able to realize the pressure on the newcomers to join in old religious rites of seed benediction and harvest festival and the dedication of the fields to the local Baal, rites which would seem to their teachers no less necessary than the sowing and reaping themselves. Jehovah, known in the wilderness and in days of war, will confront again the Baalim of the cornfield and the vineyard and the olive orchard and the blue field of flax—"my lovers who give me my bread and my water, my oil and my drink"—and the following of "false gods" need seem no longer an abstract and inexplicable stupidity, quite unlike any temptation of our own.

Manners and customs come first, maps and time-charts a little later, as the need of order grows. Secular and religious lessons will keep pace, and can help each other in a multitude of ways to which many teachers bear witness. "I have tried to take the Bible stories both for English and for English literature. More than anything else I have tried not to make Scripture a compartment subject. It seems more real if it is introduced unexpectedly and casually in other subjects." "We refer to our Bible heroes during the day as much as to our literary heroes, and so we keep our Bible heroes alive." "In literature, history, and geography teaching I use a Bible as a source quite often. For instance,

my history period includes the translation of the Bible; the geography of Europe includes the countries round the Mediterranean; regional geography brings in the plains of Europe and Asia peopled by Bible types. In literature, too, I make use of descriptive passages, especially from the Psalms, for language study. When we take narrative poems, the original theme sometimes occurs in the Bible, and it is interesting to compare the Bible version." "I have identified Bible countries with the Holy Land of the Crusades and the Mesopotamia of the Great War, and recently have linked up Mosul and Irak. The children seem to be keener when they find the Scripture places discussed in other lessons. It seems to bring the places closer, and the children are less shy. I really think the main difficulty lies in the fact that there is too little correlated work."

Besides bringing the Bible into other lessons, we can bring the rest of the world into the lesson on the Bible. Cuttings from newspapers will make real the excavations in Crete and Egypt and Palestine, Assyria and Chaldea, which themselves have made more real the happenings on the Bible stage. Pictures of modern refugees and of the results of modern deportations will bring home the ancient proceedings, which certainly were not more humane or better organized. Not only likenesses, but connections between past and present, may be found. "I once traced out with a class the various religious sects in the

town, with the characteristics and history of each; then we traced the development of religious worship in England from St. Paul, through the Romans, up to the rise of Methodism, and I believe it helped to make the New Testament, as the history of the beginning of these things, much more interesting and real to them." New Testament teachings may be made more real by touching, without unfair pressure, upon topics of our own day. It would have done no one any harm even in war-time to consider for a moment whether Jew and Samaritan could be likened to Englishman and German. Sometimes the thin veil of antique language may be lifted. "In New Testament lessons I have found that interest is keener if at times a modern translation is used." In all ways, "as lessons become less and less watertight, the oneness of life becomes a greater reality to us all, and we see our little place in the divine plan."

2.

Some earnest teachers feel that this interconnection and piercing of veils is needed even more with the New Testament than with the Old.[1] "In the Gospels," writes one, "it is difficult to freshen the girls' susceptibilities to the living and

[1] The grown person may need it no less than the child. Several of my correspondents speak of the help they have found in "The Jesus of History" (T. R. Glover) and the anonymous "By an Unknown Disciple" (Hodder and Stoughton).

dramatic appeal of Christ's life and teaching. They see a mechanical stagey figure . . . a supernatural symbol going through a set of mechanical duties all preordained. They lost long ago whatever sense they may have had of a life palpitating with romance and high adventure, full of disturbing dilemmas, momentous decisions, hairbreadth escapes.'' From another teacher in another part of England: ''The children, I find, very rarely admire Christ as a character. They describe him as 'very good and holy,' sometimes 'kind' and 'just,' but never as 'brave, gallant, generous,' which are the adjectives they apply to their heroes in other books. I have sometimes asked a class to talk about some of their favourite characters and what they like in them, and then found from the Bible how many of these qualities Christ possesses. I find that a suggested comparison with even an incomparably lesser character who happens to be a living ideal to a child will sometimes lead her to regard Christ in a new and brighter light.'' And from a country school in a third county: ''One of my boys, aged twelve, said it did not matter Jesus being crucified; it wouldn't hurt him; God wouldn't let it hurt him. He thought it was a very happy solution of the problem of evil that the redemption of the world should be effected by someone who would not suffer. The same question arises in the story of the Temptation. The children are quite sure that if Christ had cast himself down God would

have kept him safe. They don't understand that he really felt hungry; they think God wouldn't let him feel hungry."

It is curious and interesting to notice this reappearance of a heresy against which Ignatius the prisoner wrote so fiercely eighteen hundred years ago. "Stop your ears, as often as any shall speak contrary to Jesus Christ. . . . If, as some pretend, he only seemed to suffer, why then am I bound? why do I desire to fight with beasts? I die in vain." "If all these things were done only in show by our Lord, then do I also seem only to be bound. Why have I given up myself to death, to the fire, to the sword, to wild beasts? . . . In the name of Jesus Christ I undergo all, to suffer together with him."

"In a question of this kind," says the teacher last quoted, "I leave the matter open. I tell the boy my own view and other views, and suggest that he forms his own, but considers the question again later." No doubt this is right, but he might be led to consider it in connection with some heroic story from to-day's newspaper or yesterday's history-book. If a man saves another at the cost of life or limb to himself, does he suffer? If a mother goes short at dinner that her children may have enough, is she not hungry? Was Sir Philip Sidney not thirsty?

3.

Now, if we are thus to foster a realization of things as they happened, an imaginative sympathy with persons who trod steep ways before we were born, and an interweaving of divinity with the whole world that we know, we shall find ourselves fostering also that spirit of questioning and thoughtful criticism which is welcomed in every other lesson in a modern school. We must be prepared to meet it in this lesson also.

The difficulties of an intelligent class in studying the Old Testament will probably take two different forms, expressed by the questions: "Was it right?" and "Is it true?" Let us take the former first.

The Old Testament preserves for us the record of a nation's progress in divine knowledge, and the beginning of a progress is further back than its end. Part of our duty in teaching it is precisely to show that the learning of some points of right and wrong may be a slow business; that, though honest men in different ages of history agree in the main, yet some deeds have been honestly thought right which we now know to be wrong, and others have been thought wrong which we now hold to be right or innocent. We must say frankly that we think the hero or the writer of some story was mistaken in his view of what the Lord commanded, and we must try to cultivate such imagination as will realize sympathetically the cause of the mistake. A long

history, for instance, of the yearning to give one's best to God, shadowed by the ignorance which can conceive only one way of such giving, must lie behind the decision of Abraham, and of many a father before and since, to sacrifice the only son.

The discussion of Old Testament ethics is comparatively easy ; that of the Gospel teaching is much harder. We shall not force discussion here on a class that does not desire it, but the finding of difficulties may show sometimes that the finder is reading with real attention and freshness of mind. Even the following from a Lancashire country school may illustrate this : "The children's chief difficulty is their rebellion at what they consider the socialistic teaching of Jesus. I have been very careful to avoid bringing up anything for discussion which I knew would be at variance with their home life (they are mostly farmers' children), and the children themselves (the thirteen- and fourteen-year-olds) raised the point first. They feel that they have no need for a Jesus who teaches such wild doctrines. I have tried to counteract this by a detailed study of the life of the people of Palestine, and of life at different stages of history. The Oxford Geographies (Herbertson) were helpful for the first, and the Piers Plowman histories invaluable for the second." Such teaching will evidently demand the use of the teacher's best intelligence, and his own effort to understand.

4.

After the ethical puzzles let us consider the historical : "the never-ending question," as one teacher calls it, "Is it true?"

Some teachers have a short way with this. "I usually say that stories in the Bible are true, for, if not true in the literal sense, there is some sense in which they may be called true." "My reply is always an unhesitating 'Yes.' All questions of allegory, symbolism, or poetical fancy I leave alone." Frankly, I hold that this method is wholly wrong. It is one thing to say to the questioning child, "This is true in a certain sense," or (as I have heard one teacher say), "It is true in principle," if he understands this as meaning "It is not literally true, but think it over." But it is quite another thing to answer "It is true" when we know that his only idea is literal truth ; and it seems to me to be contrary to every duty of teacher to pupil, and to every law of honesty amongst human beings.

The problem will not often arise for teachers of infants,[1] since persons under seven usually accept all stories with a wide tolerance, and are not much interested in the difference between fact and non-fact. The Cambridge "Children's Bible" puts the matter in its proper setting when it heads the chief Old Testament section "Stories that Jesus would Learn from His Mother" ; and to infants we need only tell the stories in this

[1] Of course, if it does arise we must tell the truth to infants as to anyone else.

light, refraining from making difficulties for the future by insisting gratuitously that the event happened just so. But from seven or eight onwards the children are likely to raise the question of truth; and *the first teacher who meets it must give a truthful answer.* It is disastrous to give falsehood now on the ground of the questioner's youth, and to leave truth to be discovered, with far greater disturbance, in later years. A misunderstanding accidentally caused at six may be painlessly corrected at nine; but what is taught at nine and ten and eleven, and left to be taken up into all the new spiritual growths of adolescence, may often be altered thereafter only with the greatest pain and loss. We must appeal to the honour of the teacher in the junior school.

Difficulties of language, of course, are real. When we cannot say "This is true," we may yet feel rightly that "It is not true" is inadequate and misleading. Probably no short answer will suffice at first (though afterwards it would be pedantic to use a long one every time that the question came up). It will often be best in the beginning to reply, "What do you think?" or "What do the rest of the class think?" They may reach or be led to very reasonable conclusions as to what probably happened, and how the story may have grown in the telling; how a hyperbole may have been misinterpreted or some other mistake made; and they may be able to see some truth to which even the mistake bears witness. Elisha may not really have

made the axe-head swim, but he impressed his neighbours as being so great a man that it was natural for them in those days to think that he did this. Further, the teacher must know, even if the children find it hard to realize, how much the desire for literal truth is a modern and not an ancient characteristic; how an ancient historian felt it right to make a work of art, and irrelevant to ask perpetually whether a detail of speech or action was fiction or fact; and how a Jew in particular felt that the spiritual intention of a story was the all-important thing.

Often the discussion will not lead to any final conclusion, and we may tell the children truthfully that different scholars hold different views. Our chief end will be that they should recognize it as right to use their best reasoning powers in this lesson, as in others. Subject to this, we shall take great care not to give an unnecessary shock to anybody's feelings; and for this reason among others I urge once more that this kind of teaching should be given as early as possible, since the feelings of eight years old are much less easily hurt than those of fourteen. For the same reason, we shall be careful about the tone of the discussion, and especially about the physical tone of our own voice, and about the kind of phrase we use. Further, so far as possible we must work from a broad base; and work, not by attack, but by incidental correction of mistaken ideas in the light of wider thought and knowledge.

If ethical difficulties have arisen first, we shall

already have made an approach to the historical by explaining some of the cases of "The Lord said . . ." in the way touched on a few pages back. If not, it may be the easiest plan to begin by drawing the attention of the class, incidentally in the course of study, to some example of a double story. If they search their Bibles to find how Saul first met David, they will find two separate and different accounts in 1 Sam. xvi. and xvii. respectively. If they are thus brought naturally to realize that two contributions from different sources have been put together by a later hand, the foundation for everything essential will have been laid. Or in the story of Joseph we may have told both versions from the beginning—"Some say the Midianites came, some say Ishmaelites."

Here are a few specimens of methods used by my correspondents:

"I made up my mind that with every new class I took in Scripture, of children over eight years old, I would first talk about how the Bible came to us, the difference between the Old and New Testaments, and the different accounts we get of the same events, through different people describing them, and through the oral method of passing down the stories from one generation to another before they were written. Since then Scripture has been one of my favourite lessons. I am convinced that this is the only fair way of teaching children, so that they may not be rudely disillusioned afterwards, as I was."

(Standard V., boys.) "How could Noah's

sons marry people of another land? This type of question is the starting-point for a discussion of the history of the Bible; how it came to be written at all; legend, allegory, fact sorted out; difficulties of translation of ancient to modern language and ideas; probable inaccuracies, etc. I find children very reasonable beings in delving into the past, extremely interested in the subject, and capable of giving their own explanations after a course of such discussions. . . . In literature lessons we sometimes discuss what would happen if later ages took (*e.g.*) Byron's 'Destruction of Sennacherib' or John Oxenham's 'Bees in Amber' as historical sources. Here one can get the child to understand what has happened in successive translations and retellings of Bible stories and history."

(Children 6—9.) "A difficulty arises with the story of Creation. In the ordinary history lesson they hear of slow development from Tree-Dwellers to Cave-Dwellers, and so on. Even some of my younger children will ask how the story of the Tree-Dwellers and this other story can both be true. . . . I have tried to show them that Genesis i. is a Jewish idea of the Creation, and that probably the 'day' really meant a long period of time."[1]

(Central school.) "As the girls are new to us, at first we feel it necessary to walk warily

[1] I should prefer to say that the day "was" a long period. It is hardly fair to suggest that the writer "meant" this.

and to gain their confidence in a constructive manner. I lay much stress on the principle of a wider knowledge of the earth and the universe, historically and geographically, as well as on the importance of recognizing sincerity and truth in its manifold literary forms. When this work has been carried out for one or two years it is possible to deal with controversial subjects. The following is an outline of a lesson on the Flood: The 'world' as understood in ancient days; its narrow limits; the centres of civilization in the river valleys; difficulty of control at first. Desolation caused by a flood. Retelling of story, adding new features. Many stories of '*the*' Flood—Babylon, Egypt, Amazon. Knowledge through excavations. The Babylonian story and the Bible story; differences in interpretation; the worship of Jehovah contrasted with the gods of Babylon. Straight reading of the Bible story to show how much 'God' stood for awe, reverence, the power ruling the world.''

5.

We have said that all possible pains should be taken to spare unnecessary shock or unhappiness to the children, and, as the last writer quoted wisely suggests, we should go slowly with a new class. It is fair to avoid taking controversial passages until our pupils have had time to learn to know us and to trust our goodwill. This will do much to guard against any difficulty arising

outside the school. But difficulty still may arise occasionally, and we must now discuss this possibility of disapproval by the parents.

Different districts seem to differ immensely in this respect. While many parents are sympathetic and many are indifferent to such teaching as I have been describing, there seem to be some places (usually rural or mining) where nearly all would be hostile. In such a case I can only offer some very diffident practical suggestions :

1. We shall probably need to bide our time longer than usual, so that not only the children but the parents may know and trust us. A few years of residence in the district, spent in trying to act not only as teacher but as neighbour and friend, may make all the difference.

2. A head teacher may sometimes work still more directly. One writes : "A good way to ensure the understanding of parents is to have early in each term a meeting of parents, and to explain to them what the school is aiming at in the Scripture syllabus for that term. In one case a Parents' Study Circle, at their suggestion, grew out of it, and was invaluable."

3. Apart from this, even more importance than usual will attach to considerate speech and to a right tone of voice. These may not be reproduced in a child's account of events, therefore we ought to come face to face with a parent who complains, and try to convince him that at any rate we meant well.

4. If the matter comes before a higher court—

of the managers or the local authority—the chance of educated support for reasonable action increases year by year, though here also it will be desirable to have a face-to-face meeting or to write a full and careful letter.

5. In many districts now we can appeal for support to the officially issued syllabus. The West Riding authority explicitly says: "It is very desirable that the older pupils should know something of the accepted results of modern Biblical scholarship." And one of the prefatory essays to the Cambridgeshire syllabus seems a very remarkable landmark in the progress of officially allowed freedom of speech. The teacher using this syllabus is directed, "in dealing with the subject of miracles, to explain that it is not necessary in order to be a Christian to believe that these things happened exactly as they are described. . . . He will explain . . . that what the 'miracle' witnesses to is the tremendous impression received of the action and power of God, rather than the mode in which God acted. . . ."

6. Sometimes, especially in a town, a lion in the path may turn out to be chained. "Until two months ago," writes one teacher, "I had heard no complaints of my method of teaching Genesis stories. Then the headmaster asked me to tell the children that 'Adam and Eve' was not a myth, as one of the parents did not like her child to be told it was. I said I was sorry if I had distressed the child, and would try to

put it right. I began to think it over, and decided in the end that I could do nothing. I had said Abraham brought the story from Chaldea, but I had never talked about myths. I concluded that the child had told the story as I told it, and the parent had completed it with her opinion. I felt I should make more difficulties if I said anything to the children, and I felt very miserable. I could not teach it in any other way, and I wondered what I should do. When I told the headmaster he told me not to trouble about it. The parent, he said, would not make a bother, and her opinions were the same as mine, only she preferred her child to be told that the Bible account was fact. I have since found it possible to go on with the methods I have used all along."

7. But when all has been said, it seems that in some places for the present there is nothing to be done but to omit from the syllabus every Bible passage that can raise this difficulty. We must omit the Old Testament if necessary altogether, explaining frankly to managers or inspectors our reasons for doing so. If authority forbids this, I fear there is no choice but to ask to be excused from teaching Scripture.

Meanwhile the greater obligation is laid on all teachers elsewhere—that national opinion by degrees may be educated throughout. Yet we must not think that the problem will ever wholly disappear. There never will come a time in any country when a teacher, touching on anything

about which people really care, will find it a perfectly safe and easy task. There never will come a time when all groups stand at the same level of development or all minds agree, and wherever there is caring there is the chance of tragedy. It will sometimes be our duty to take the risk; it will sometimes be our duty to avoid it, lest disproportionate damage should be done to other parts of our work. The only thing which can never be right is to say that something is true which we do not believe to be true.

CHAPTER VII

A CHAPTER FOR SOME TEACHERS

I.

I HAVE tried throughout this book to claim a wide field of choice for the content of the lesson called Religious Instruction or Scripture or Divinity. The best guidance seems to lie in the old idea of "Sunday reading," widened to include Sunday looking and listening and doing. Whatsoever things are lovely—flower or music or parable, heroic legend or the history of a martyr—have a prima facie claim to a place in the divinity hour. Whatever is admirable, whatever truly fulfils itself, bringing its indwelling spirit clearly to the surface, should be helpful to us in the study of that Spirit. Many such things we study, for convenience, in lessons under other names, but this arrangement is modern enough in comparison with the age of Man. We can hardly find any knowledge or skill which originally was not regarded as religious knowledge or religious training, from dancing to the use of metals and thence to the story of the making of the world; and we have a right to reclaim for religion anything that we find helpful there. Just as we may often profit by bringing the Bible into the hour for history or literature, so we should feel ourselves free to say of some passage

of history or literature : "This is so fine a story that we will take it to-morrow at nine o'clock."

The divinity lesson, we said in the first chapter, has to extend and interpret the experience of God which already runs through the child's life. In all teaching we try to help him to come into touch with the width and depth of the universe and of his own self ; in this special lesson we have to take care that the widest and deepest and most understanding contact is not forgotten.

Now some of my correspondents hold that the difficulties in this lesson come only from lack of preparation and from lack of good method. Others have found another kind of difficulty, and in this final chapter I wish to say what I can to these others. This is a chapter for some teachers only.

2.

I ought to make it clear to begin with that I do not think it is everybody's duty to teach divinity. It is often possible to make arrangements to meet a conscientious refusal ; and, even apart from anyone's refusing, a school with more than one teacher would often do well to give more of the work to the one who does it best. This need not mean combining several classes. If the lesson did not occur in every class at the same time of day, but occupied in turn the four different positions which the law allows, and if more schools applied for leave to replace the daily short lesson by a longer lesson twice a

week (a practice which would have other advantages), then the way for good experiment would be opened widely.

Still, all experiment will be wider and more profitable the greater the number of sincere and intelligent persons who are willing to take part. Therefore it is worth while to discuss the obstacles which impede some of them.

3.

With some people the obstacle seems to be no more than a tradition of dislike to this lesson in their own mind or in the school, or a kind of inertia without much deeper reason. "When first I began Scripture teaching," writes one correspondent, "I disliked the Scripture lesson, and consequently my Scripture lessons were not successful. Since then I have deliberately tried to like it, and now I really enjoy it. That is the secret of success in Bible teaching or in any other teaching."

Another obstacle is shyness. It may be just as well to be shy as a safeguard against being glib ; but the exact point at which shyness begins is largely a matter of custom and convention, and it is a pity to lose the power of expressing what we count best, or never to gain that power. And the greater part of good teaching leaves ample room for the privacies of the heart ; since our task is to stand with the children before the splendours of life and to say to them : "Look and see." Our self-consciousness ought not to

cut us off from bringing our younger fellows into touch with David and Isaiah and St. Peter, St. Perpetua and St. Joan, to say nothing of Him who thought so highly of children.

But shyness blends with what may go much deeper. Some may dislike to teach religion because they believe they are not religious themselves ; because their own footing in life is insecure, or their vision half-deliberately limited, or because they intend not to aim at something which yet they inwardly judge to be the best, or yet again (a very different reason) because they connect the idea of "religion" with something which their best selves do not esteem.

I wish to distinguish carefully between all these positions on the one hand and uncertainty of belief about some historical statement on the other. (Of the latter I shall speak presently.) It has always been recognized that we may have belief in historical and even metaphysical doctrines without being religious. The causes may be different in every person, and may be far from clear to the person himself. If he says that he dislikes religion only because he dislikes what somebody else has wrongly set forth as religion, the issue is chiefly one of words. Some who have called themselves anti-religious have had a very solid religion of their own. But if mind and life are really divided and insecure, it may be through inertia or self-distrust, which clogs our tendency towards fuller being. One can only tentatively suggest answers ; each person may need something different. In so far as we are self-distrust-

ful, we may recall once more that the teacher of religion has to point his pupils, not to himself, but to something beyond. To know oneself as only a fellow-seeker with the children, no further on than they and in no position to preach to them from above—this should be a help rather than a hindrance to the best kind of teaching. In so far as we are hampered or inert, from reasons natural or acquired, physicians of body and mind have given the right advice to many others before us: Begin with such infinitesimal power as you have, and more power will come.

But of those who believe they really have no religion in them we must ask: Are you sure? Is there nothing which takes you beyond yourself? nothing beside which you feel that your private self ceases to count? Is there not something which you would gladly serve, and gladly be possessed by, even though all your imperfections seem to stand between? and something else which you would truly rather die than do, even though you cannot guarantee yourself against doing it? and something else, of glittering attraction, which yet you know to be a false treasure and unsatisfying? If so, then at these points you know God, and the devil, and Antichrist. Here if nowhere else you have pierced through things temporal to things eternal. There seems little reason to refuse to give children a hand in the same undertaking, if only by telling them of others who have carried it further.

4.

Finally, we have to discuss a very different obstacle. There may be a mind, not unreligious by nature or by will, which yet is unable to accept some part of the current religious creed. I must speak here as I see the matter, though many who read this book may disagree with me.

First, if temporarily or permanently we have difficulties in belief, we shall inevitably suffer for a time at any rate, but we must not add to that inevitable suffering any unnecessary despair. If we have touch with things eternal, even in the sense that we still seek them in the dark ; if we have principle in our lives, even in the sense that we are criticizing every principle we ever learnt to formulate ; if we have not abandoned ourselves to content with the cramped superficial life that mere self-seeking gives ; then our house is founded on the rock and will remain there in spite of any changes in its building. This briefly, for any who are in trouble.

Secondly, as regards consenting to teach, the mere existence of blank spaces in our creed should not, I think, prevent us from doing so. Our view of the universe may be incomplete, yet we may be able to give some help to those who are younger than ourselves. Many, though not all, of a child's puzzles can be smoothed by the quite elementary knowledge of an educated and reflective person.

But what can we teach if we cannot teach a

whole creed? Most of us, I suggest, could still find plenty of "Sunday reading." The amount of formulated doctrine which can be taught to children is not indefinitely great, and the most earnest Christian would defeat his own ends if he made the children give it an amount of time that could only turn to weariness. This means that in two and a half weekly hours a good deal of time will be left for more concrete and scattered presentation of that divinity which shines through nature and human life. If the former part of the work has to be left to someone else, we could do our part in the latter. But if it is urged that the two tasks cannot be kept apart, we must admit that it is not ideal to keep them so. Each teacher, or if necessary each head teacher, must judge for himself the case with which he has to do, and consider how the teaching strength of this special school can be best used for the good of the children. The assistant may ease the head teacher's task by being ready to make positive suggestions of the kind of syllabus that he could conscientiously take.

5.

Personally, I should wish that a sincere and right-seeking man or woman, teaching children of mine, should feel free to express frankly the opinions at which he had arrived. I should expect the children to gain and not lose by finding that grown-up persons, equally well mean-

ing, did not all think alike. But where the children of many different people are sent compulsorily to be taught by us, we know that beyond a certain variable point that freedom cannot be used, if only because the feelings and controversies roused are enough to make the damage outweigh the gain. The position of that point is determined by the double position (*a*) of opinion among the parents of our children, (*b*) of general opinion in the country, such as the children, for instance, will meet when they leave school. Such determination is by no means simple ; it may vary in different districts and with different social groups ; and it has changed considerably in the last fifty or sixty years. Almost everywhere the critical balance must now fall beyond those questions which arise chiefly in teaching the Old Testament. Almost everywhere it is now not only our right but our plainest duty, as I urged in the last chapter, to teach, not only our own children, but our class in school, that ethics, science, and history-writing have all changed in certain respects since certain Old Testament passages were written.

But we cannot judge so clearly as regards the New Testament. Some discussion indeed there must be for any intelligent teaching or understanding. We must know and teach in outline how the history seems to have been transmitted, why the first three Gospels stand so much apart from the fourth, and why the first Gospel makes peculiar use of texts from the prophets ; and we

should know something of the kind of background, Gentile as well as Jewish, that framed the teachings of St. Paul. But if any teacher feels that he is unable to accept some important doctrine which yet seems inextricably interwoven with the documents of the New Testament, or if he can accept it only in a sense differing so much from the popular sense that he feels it wrong to say that he agrees; then, though I should still wish him to be frank with my own children, I believe that it will be his duty to keep silence with the children in school, and that he must avoid such subjects as would absolutely forbid him to be silent.

I would still not draw the line too close, since the fear of embarrassment ought not to force us to sacrifice too much of positive good. Moreover, the most careful drawing up of a syllabus, and even abstention altogether from divinity teaching, will not prevent a difficult question being occasionally asked, if the children's relation to us is what it should be. If we judge that we ought not to answer according to our own lights, the natural alternative is to tell the questioner to ask his parents. If the parents, as sometimes happens, refer the question back to the teacher, then he is free to do as he thinks best in private conversation with that child.

I would only add further that if a person, however young, is in real distress about religious belief and sincerely asks to know our own view,

then the duty of one human soul to another must override lesser duties, and we must give, in the best light we have, whatever help we can. As to what this may be, and how much full speaking is involved, no rule can possibly be laid down.

6.

Meanwhile all teachers of divinity, like all other teachers, must reflect that, however great our task in some aspects, in another aspect it can only be small. The best teaching can form no more than a fragmentary contribution to a wider experience. We shall experiment with more skill and courage, perhaps; we shall be more willing to be silent and to let alone sometimes; and we shall view our failures, real or apparent, with less consternation, if we know at heart that the greater part of learning must always go on beyond the reach of our hands, wherever the spirit in the universe meets with the spirit in each child.

APPENDIX

APPENDIX

A.—Examinations for Teachers.

Anyone who wishes to obtain special qualifications will find two University certificates which do not demand a knowledge of Greek. They are :

The Cambridge Certificate of Proficiency in Religious Knowledge (information from the General Secretary, Syndicate Buildings, Cambridge) ;

and

The London Certificate in Religious Knowledge (information from the Registrar of the University Extension Board, University of London, S.W. 7).

Those who are willing to take Greek should apply to the External Registrar, University of London, for particulars of the London Diploma and the London B.D. ; and to Miss Bevan, 5, Rawlinson Road, Oxford, for particulars of the Lambeth Diploma.

B.—Courses of Study.

(i.) Teachers who have taken a two-year college course should be aware of the possibility

of taking a third year, either immediately or after an interval spent in teaching. Those who are well recommended by their former college and by their local authority may obtain the Board's grant for a year of study, spent chiefly on whatever subject interests them most. This subject might well be divinity.

(ii.) Two colleges have been established for persons engaged in religious education, and day-school teachers might gain much from a course in either. They are :

St. Christopher's College (for women only ; Church of England), 27, Vanbrugh Park, Blackheath, London, S.E. 3 ;

and

West Hill Training College (for men and women ; Principal, Mr. G. H. Archibald), Selly Oak, Birmingham.

A third-year course for trained certificated teachers could probably be arranged in connection with either college.

(iii.) A Vacation Term for Biblical Study is held alternately at Oxford and Cambridge for a fortnight in the summer. The Secretary is Miss E. Lawder, 25, Halifax Road, Cambridge.

C.—How to Look for Books.

(i.) Write for prospectuses of books, pictures, and apparatus to any or all of the following (I think that all teachers would be wise to include the address given first, and that teachers in Church schools should also include the second) :

"Teachers and Taught," 4, Fleet Lane, E.C. 4.

National Society's Depository, 19, Great Peter Street, Westminster, S.W. 1.

National Sunday-School Union (Graded Schools Department), 57 and 59, Ludgate Hill, E.C. 4.

Church of England Sunday-School Institute, 13, Serjeants' Inn, Fleet Street, E.C. 4.

United Council for Missionary Education (Edinburgh House Press), 2, Eaton Gate, S.W. 1.

(ii.) Other useful addresses are :

National Adult School Union, 30, Bloomsbury Street, W.C. 1.

Student Christian Movement Bookroom, 32, Russell Square, W.C. 1.

Religious Tract Society, 65, St. Paul's Churchyard, E.C. 4.

Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, Northumberland Avenue, W.C. 2.

British and Foreign Bible Society, 146, Queen Victoria Street, E.C. 4.

(iii.) In this subject, as in all others, it is a teacher's duty to find out what books are available in the municipal or county libraries, and in any library maintained by the L.E.A. for the use of its teachers; and to be diligent in suggesting new acquisitions for all these. The large circulating libraries with local branches (Boots, Smith's, Wyman's, etc.) are often helpful; and so are those in London which send books by post to subscribers at a distance—(*e.g.*, The Times Book Club, Wigmore Street, and Mudie's Library, New Oxford Street). A famous old library charging no subscription is Dr. Williams' Library, Gordon Square, W.C. 1; and an admirable modern institution is the Central Library for Students, 9, Galen Place, Bury Street, W.C. 1.

Teachers whose salary has risen fairly high on the scale, or those who have received a legacy, can obtain magnificent and most courteous postal service from the London Library, St. James' Square, S.W. 1. I have never ceased to be thankful myself that I paid a life subscription to this library with the margin of my first year's salary as a Head.

(iv.) The local clergyman or minister should be able to recommend books, and might be willing to lend some.

(v.) Finally, remember the possibility of a library holiday, and learn the delight of a week in summer spent in a great reading-room. At our national institutions no payment is required for admission as a reader, but forms of recommendation have to be filled up. Write for information to the Director of the British Museum Reading Room, London; the Bodleian Library, Oxford; the University Library, Cambridge; or the National Library of Wales, Aberystwyth.

D.—Some Books for Bible Study.

(i.) If a teacher could only afford 6s. to begin with, and wished to gain a view of the whole Bible narrative, I should recommend the purchase of "The Bible for Youth" (introductions and notes by R. C. Gillie and James Reid; published by Jack). This is an admirable production in which the chief contents of the Bible are arranged in chronological order, the writings of the prophets inserted in the places to which they belong, and connections and explanations supplied where they are needed.

If he can afford 12s. 6d., let him buy Professor A. S. Peake's "Commentary on the Bible." This has notes on the whole Bible, and

important articles by authorities on its history and literature.

(ii.) An invaluable annotated Scripture Bibliography for the use of teachers in secondary schools is issued by a committee of the Society for Old Testament Study, and published by Nisbet and Co., 22, Berners Street, W. 1. This costs sixpence.

(iii.) The following is a list of some useful short books, most of which are included and annotated in the Bibliography just mentioned :

(*a*) *The Bible as a Whole.*

BAIKIE, J. : Lands and Peoples of the Bible. (Black. 5s.)

BARCLAY, G. : The Making and Meaning of the Bible. (S.C.M. 4s. and 2s. 6d.)

HOGARTH, D. G. : The Ancient East. (Home Univ. Library. 2s. 6d.)

MACALISTER, R. A. S. : History of Civilization in Palestine. (Cambridge. 4s.)

MACKIE, G. M. : Bible Manners and Customs. (Black. 1s.)

SELBIE, W. B. : The Nature and Message of the Bible. (S.C.M. Out of print.)

SMYTH, J. PATERSON : Our Bible in the Making. (Sampson Low. 3s. 6d.)

(*b*) *The Old Testament.*

ALINGTON, C. W.: Why We Read the Old Testament. (Bell. 1s. 6d.)

AYTOUN, R. A.: God in the Old Testament. (Allen and Unwin. 3s. 6d.)

BLUNT, A. W. F.: Israel before Christ: An Account of Social and Religious Development in the Old Testament. (Clarendon Press. 2s. 6d.)

BOX, G. H.: Short Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament. (Rivingtons. 2s. 6d.)

CHAPMAN, A. T.: An Introduction to the Pentateuch. (Cambridge. 4s.)

CHARLES, R. H.: Between the Old and New Testaments. (Home University Library. 2s. 6d.)

COMPSTON, H. F. B.: Here Beginneth: A Study in the Hebrew Scriptures. (Mowbray. 1s.)

COOK, S. A.: The Religion of Ancient Palestine. (Constable. 2s.)

CORNILL, C. R.: The Prophets of Israel. (Open Court Co., 149, Strand. 1s.)

GILLIE, R. C.: Hebrew Prophets. (Black. 5s.)

KING, L. W.: Legends of Babylon and Egypt in Relation to Hebrew Tradition. (Oxford. 3s.)

MARTIN, HUGH: The Meaning of the Old Testament. (S.C.M. 2s. 6d.)

NAIRNE, A.: Everyman's Story of the Old Testament. (Mowbray. 2s. 6d.)

ŒSTERLEY, W. O. E.: The Psalms in the Jewish Church. (Skeffington. 3s. 6d.)

OTTLEY, R. L.: The Hebrew Prophets. (Rivingtons. 2s.)

POVAH, J. W.: A Study of the Old Testament. (S.C.M. 2s. 6d.)

PROTHERO: The Psalms in Human Life. (Murray. 2s. 6d.)

REDLICH, E. B.: Introduction to Old Testament Study. (Macmillan. 6s.)

ROBINSON, H. W.: The Cross of Jeremiah (S.C.M. 2s. 6d.)

————: The Religious Ideas of the Old Testament. (Duckworth. 3s. 6d.)

SANDS, P. C.: Literary Genius of the Old Testament. (Clarendon Press. 4s. 6d.)

SELFE, R.: The Work of the Prophets. (Longmans. 2s. and 2s. 6d.)

SMITH, G. A.: The Early Poetry of Israel. (Oxford. 3s.)

STORR, V. F. : The Prophets of the Old Testament and Their Message. (S.P.C.K. 2s. 6d.)

WOODS and POWELL : The Hebrew Prophets for English Readers. (Clarendon Press. Four vols., 3s. 6d. each.)

(*c*) *The New Testament.*

ANGUS, S. : The Environment of Early Christianity. (Duckworth. 3s. 6d.)

DODD, C. H. : The Meaning of Paul for To-day. (Allen and Unwin. 6s. 6d.)

FORDE, G. M. : Christ, the King of Love. (Skeffington. 3s.)

GLOVER, T. R. : The Jesus of History. (S.C.M. 2s. 6d.)

GORE, C. : The Sermon on the Mount. (Murray. 5s. and 1s. 6d.)

GRUBB, E. : The Word Made Flesh (St. John's Gospel). (S.C.M. 2s. 6d.)

JOHNSTON, C. N. : St. Paul and His Mission to the Roman Empire. (Black. 2s.)

JONES, M. : The Four Gospels. (S.P.C.K. 4s.)

KENNEDY, H. A. A. : Vital Forces of the Early Church. (S.C.M. 3s.)

LOCK, W. : St. Paul the Master Builder. (Methuen. 5s.)

MATHEWS, B. : Paul the Dauntless. (Partridge. 6s.)

MICKLEM, N. : The Galilean. (Clarke. 5s.)

MUIRHEAD, A. : The Times of Christ. (T. and T. Clark. 3s.)

MUMFORD, E. R. : Jesus Christ : His Life and Teaching. (Longmans. 1s.)

NAIRNE, A. : The Johannine Writings. (Longmans. 2s. 6d.)

NEILL, S. : How Readest Thou? A Simple Introduction to the New Testament. (S.C.M. 4s. and 2s. 6d.)

ROBINSON, A. W. : The Christ of the Gospels. (S.C.M. 3s.)

————, J. A. : The Study of the Gospels. (Longmans. 3s. 6d.)

————, T. H. : St. Mark's Life of Jesus. (S.C.M. 4s. and 2s. 6d.)

SELBIE, W. B. : The Life and Teaching of Jesus Christ. (Jack. Out of print.)

SMYTH, J. PATERSON : Life and Letters of St. Paul. (Sampson Low. 3s. 6d.)

STRACHAN, R. H. : The Fourth Gospel. (S.C.M. 5s.)

E.—Some Non-Biblical Material.

(i.) For missionary literature write to the United Council for Missionary Education, 2, Eaton Gate, S.W. 1.

(ii.) A great deal of story material drawn from history, legend, poetry, and newspapers, has been collected by Mr. Frederick J. Gould. An annotated list of his books can be obtained from Armorel, Woodfield Avenue, Ealing, W. 5.

(iii.) Consult the catalogues of the National Adult School Union and the Student Christian Movement (addresses on p. 107).

(iv.) A first-rate guide to the best books for children is "The Child's Bookshelf," by Lilian Stevenson (S.C.M. 3s.). This contains annotated lists of books on "Heroism, Service, Patriotism, Friendliness, Joy, and Beauty."

F.—The Teacher's Own Reading.

For further guidance in this I should like to recommend "A Short Bibliography of the Christian Faith and Life" and its "Supplement," published at 3d. and 2d. respectively by the S.C.M.

THE FAITH OF A TEACHER

By FANNY STREET, M.A., Author of "The Creative Life," etc. 2s. net.

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